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A purpose of the Augusta County Historical Society is to publish *Augusta Historical Bulletin* to be sent without charge to all members. Single issues are available at \$1.50 per copy.

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JAMES ABBOTT FISHBURNE (1850-1921)

J. B. Yount III

(Following is the text of an address recounting the life and philosophy of Professor James Abbott Fishburne (1850-1921), scholar, educator, and founder (in 1879) of Fishburne Military School at Waynesboro, Virginia. Prepared by Waynesboro Mayor Joseph Byron Yount III, an alumnus of the school and vice president of the Augusta County Historical Society. It was delivered on November 11, 1971, in Waynesboro's First Presbyterian Church before several hundred Fishburne cadets, alumni, faculty members, patrons, and friends, as part of the school's Founder's Day ceremonies.)

Fifty years ago today—November 11, 1921, in his home on Fishburne hill Professor James Abbott Fishburne, founder of the school that bears his name, died at the age of 71 years. Fifty years ago tomorrow—in this very sanctuary—the cadets and faculty of Fishburne Military School gathered with his family and the townspeople of Waynesboro for the funeral of this beloved and respected teacher and man.

In the half century since his death thousands of young men have joined the ranks of the Fishburne cadet corps. Each of us has been influenced—whether he realized it at the time or not—by the character and ideals of the Founder. The traditions of leadership, integrity, and honor that he built into his curriculum have lived on to motivate us today. It is therefore most appropriate that we remember him on this 50th anniversary of his death.

James Abbott Fishburne was born April 10, 1850, in a house on Main Street that stood on the lot where the Virginia National Bank now stands. Next door, on the lot occupied by Fishburne's Drug Store today, his father, Daniel Fishburne, operated a flourishing general store.

Daniel Fishburne had come to Waynesboro from Staunton in 1819 as a young man. The city at the time was a small settlement on the stage road from Staunton to Charlottesville. There were no railroads and only one church. Horse races and gambling were common in the flat, low-lying area near South River. Daniel Fishburne's family did not approve of his settling here, because,



Professor James Abbott Fishburne
1850-1921

Founder of Fishburne Military School



Fishburne Military School

1883



Fishburne Military School

1970

as one of them wrote a century ago, "There was at the time a wild rollicking set in the village."

Through the years Waynesboro grew and Daniel Fishburne prospered. James was the 11th of his 14 children. Although he was only a teenager when his father died, Daniel Fishburne had a profound influence on his son's life.

James enjoyed a happy youth—at least for eleven years. He described it in these words: "I enjoyed robust health and grew up in the enjoyment of the usual sports and recreations that are incident to the life of the average boy in a country village."

This happy boyhood was roughly interrupted in 1861 with the outbreak of the Civil War. Although the Fishburnes strongly opposed Virginia's secession from the Union, as did most people in this part of Virginia, they were outvoted by Eastern Virginia and watched helplessly as the union between Virginia and the Federal government was dissolved. Although Daniel Fishburne despised the institution of slavery—as family letters and diaries of the time will prove—he and his family were forced to stand by hopelessly as events stirred about them. Once Virginia had left the Union and President Lincoln had ordered the Union Army to invade the South and subdue her by force, the Fishburne family—like most Virginians—rallied to the defense of their liberty, their homes, their families, and their native state.

Civil War!

James Fishburne saw his older brothers go off to battle. Often the conflict raged only fifteen or twenty miles to the north—at Piedmont and Port Republic and Cross Keys. Waynesboro was filled with refugees and wounded soldiers home from the front. What had been a land of plenty became a stark desert of privation. As in Revolutionary times, there were heroes in the Fishburne family. The Founder's brother, Clement, who had stood as a groomsman at Stonewall Jackson's wedding, now served the great Confederate general as his adjutant. Another brother, Elliott, marched from Waynesboro at the age of 18 with a company of volunteers and three years later distinguished himself by single-handedly capturing 23 Yankee soldiers in one skirmish in Northern Virginia. But for all the heroism and patriotism the times evoked, the overall sense was one of tragedy.

In the middle of the War, Daniel Fishburne died, leaving his widow and six small children at home. His son wrote of him that his death was hastened by anxiety about his sons in the army and the condition of the country.

The war drew steadily to a close. Defeat for Virginia and the South was devastating and total. On March 2, 1865, the armies of General Sheridan and General Early fought the Battle of Waynesboro and the victorious Northern forces marched through the village streets past the Fishburne house and store. Four weeks later General Lee surrendered at Appomattox and the war was over.

James turned fifteen the day after Lee's surrender. His future was bleak and uncertain. His widowed mother was struggling to support the family. His eldest brother was dead. There was little if any money. As Mr. Fishburne described it, "Life for me took on a stormy hue because of the sufferings that all were called on to endure."

Yet he would not be discouraged. In 1865 General Robert E. Lee went to Lexington, Virginia, to become president of a small, war-torn school named Washington College, today known throughout the world as Washington and Lee University. The great Southern leader sought in this way to encourage his defeated people to work hard, educate their young, and rebuild their shattered land.

The next year, with money he had earned entirely by himself, James enrolled at Washington College. He was 16 years old. From that time until his graduation four years later, he set a brilliant record. He earned outstanding awards in advanced Latin, Greek, French, English, mathematics, and chemistry. He was a skillful debater and public speaker. He received his degree marked "With Distinguished Proficiency."

General Lee wrote his mother a special letter of congratulations on her son's achievements. The great general was particularly fond of the young boy from Waynesboro because he had made known his determination to become a teacher and dedicate his life to helping the young men of the South and had told the general of his hope that some day he could open a school of his own to achieve that goal.

General Lee encouraged him. James Fishburne never forgot it. In years afterwards cadets remembered that he would often interrupt his class and say, "Now let me tell you about General Lee." He would then talk of Lee—something he had observed about the great general or something the general had said to him. Washington, Jefferson, or Stonewall Jackson might be mentioned, but to Lee he gave the undivided devotion of his great patriotic heart.

Nothing ever influenced him more than the four years he spent under General Lee. The general's love of duty, honor, and his fellow man was clearly seen in the principles on which his student founded Fishburne Military School.

All of us who have ever been Fishburne cadets can say without exaggeration that we have passed directly under the influence of Robert E. Lee.

The Founder graduated from college in 1870, but he had no money with which to launch his own school. His brilliant record earned him a position on the faculty of the celebrated Horner Classical School in Oxford, North Carolina, which for over 80 years was considered the best preparatory school in that state. In Oxford, he met his bride-to-be, Miss Mary Amis. The Founder and his wife had no children—except the thousands of cadets they loved and guided as their own.

After several years in North Carolina, Mr. Fishburne joined his cousin, W. C. Guthrie, in a preparatory school at New Roe, Kentucky, where he served as principal until 1878. By then he was financially able to start a school of his own, and the next year he returned to Waynesboro and did so.

The history of the school itself has often been told. Briefly recounted, it opened as an academy for day pupils in 1879 with 13 boys and girls enrolled. By 1882 it had become a boys' boarding school and the curriculum included military drill and discipline. Gradually, under the watchful direction of its Founder, Fishburne won renown throughout the South with a reputation for academic excellence and for filling its promise to prepare boys and young men for college, university, or successful business life.

Professor Fishburne directed the course of his school for a total of 42 years. After 1912 he yielded the office of superintendent to Colonel Morgan H. Hudgins but until his death he remained active as the school's president.

He was a strong and remarkable man. He helped this church build a chapel for the mountain people in the isolated settlements east of Waynesboro and every Sunday by horseback he accompanied several other missionaries over the rough trails to services there. The mountain church flourishes today. A friend called him: "Kind, gentle, modest, unassuming, yet firm as the granite rocks."

The Founder never wavered from his principles. "It is my purpose," he wrote, "to have here an institution which shall rank as first-class in everything that constitutes true worth, and from

which shall go forth loyal, earnest, industrious Christian boys and young men, well equipped for the duties and responsibilities of life, and above all else to main a high standard of honor and integrity in the Corps of Cadets."

His words still rang as a challenge to me in the Corps of 1956, and they still ring as a challenge to you in the Corps of today.

For when he died—fifty years ago today—according to his faithful minister, who was with him at the end, "His last conscious utterance was a prayer for 'My Boys.'"

[James Abbott Fishburne was the great-grandson of Philip Fishburne (1722-1795), a native of Plannich-der-Chinfatz, Hesse Darmstadt, Germany, who emigrated to Pennsylvania in 1749 and in 1752 married Catherine Bretz (1724-1788) and settled on a large farm near Hummelstown in Derry township, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, where he prospered. He was a farmer and gunsmith by trade and ardently supported the colonial cause during the Revolution. His grave may be seen in the Lutheran churchyard at Hummelstown. Deitrich Fishburne (1760-1822), son of Philip and Catherine and himself a soldier in the Pennsylvania Militia during the Revolutionary War, was the founder of the Fishburne family of Augusta County, Virginia, settling in 1784 on a farm now constituting the western portion of the town of Verona, where his grave has been marked by the Daughters of the American Revolution. Deitrich married Catharine Burkhardt in Frederick, Maryland, in 1784 and their children, all reared in Augusta County, were: Philip, William, John, Mary (wife of Philip Haines), Elizabeth (wife of John Greiner), David, and Daniel, the last named being the father of James Abbott Fishburne of whom the foregoing article was written.]

STAUNTON, THE CAPITAL OF VIRGINIA

Marshall Moore Brice

During the early months of 1781 the Revolutionary War had begun to assume a normal pattern to Stauntonians, for the conflict was six years old. From the beginning Staunton and Augusta County had yielded sturdy allegiance to the Whigs, the real Americans. As one example, well before the Declaration of Independence they had donated and wagoned 130 barrels of flour to the beleagured Bostonians, who were valiantly resisting the British oppressors. In all, it had been almost an uneventful six years in this area. True, there had been an abortive uprising by a slight majority of Tory sympathizers, but it had been quelled with little effort. Another interesting development lay in the fact that this upper Shenandoah Valley had been assigned several thousand Hessian mercenary prisoners-of-war; and a small number of Quaker pacifists had also been sent to Augusta County.

In actuality, by 1781 the war was really seven years old to Stauntonians and Augustans. The expedition of 1774 against the Shawnees under Cornstalk and Logan, culminating in the bloody battle of Point Pleasant October 10, was considered by Virginians an integral part of the Revolution against Britain, the colonists harboring bitter resentment against Royal Governor Dunmore for his conciliatory attitude toward American Indians.

With this exception, however, the period of the Revolution had been rather serene in the Shenandoah Valley. The new Virginia Constitution imposed few restrictions on local governments; and the Augusta administration continued to operate essentially as it had for years. There was, of course, always stirring news of the conflict—tidings early in the war of a British raid with virtual destruction of Norfolk, Virginia, or in 1780 news of British General Leslie's uncontested landing at Portsmouth, Virginia.

Still, Norfolk and Portsmouth were hardly more than names to most people in the Valley. The war had come more closely to those families whose men had departed for the battlefield—soldiers of the Continental Line, followers of George Rogers Clark on his Western expeditions, or raw militiamen volunteering for

single campaigns. Early that year, 1781, two Augusta companies had left for Guilford Court House; and it is said that of those few who returned, all bore the scars of battle the rest of their lives.

The war had not come to Virginia in full force until 1781; and there can be no question that the Old Dominion was ill prepared. In January of that year Benedict Arnold, once an American general, now a turncoat in service of England, burned Richmond, a town of 1,800 inhabitants, capital of Virginia since 1779. In February the capable 24-year-old General Lafayette was sent south with 900 new England soldiers of the line, far from enough to curb British rapacities. Cornwallis, after his so-called victory at Guilford, marched into Virginia in early May. Upon the departure of Benedict Arnold, Governor Thomas Jefferson convened the General Assembly in Richmond; but threatened by Cornwallis's maneuvers, it adjourned May 10, to meet in Charlottesville, home of Governor Jefferson. But it was not to remain long in Charlottesville. Cornwallis dispatched his savage assistant, Major Tarleton, with 250 cavalymen, westward, in the hope of capturing the entire Virginia government. Tarleton, with his 250 crack dragoons, arrived in the hamlet of Louisa late Sunday afternoon, June 3. An American captain, Jack Jouett, spying the cavalry troop, rode furiously by a shorter route to Jefferson's home, Monticello, just outside Charlottesville, arriving there at dawn Monday, June 4. It so happened that the speakers of the House of Delegates and the Senate, Benjamin Harrison and Archibald Cary, were breakfasting with Jefferson when Jouett brought his dire report. Harrison rode away to Charlottesville, where the Assembly was gathered; and it adjourned, to convene in Staunton, some forty miles westward across the Blue Ridge, on Thursday, June 7. The legislators dispersed with what might be termed unseemly haste; but seven of the members, laggard in departure, fell into the hands of Tarleton, among them Senator Syme, Patrick Henry's half-brother.

In the meantime Tarleton sent a small detachment to Monticello, but by then Jefferson, with his family, had escaped to his plantation at Poplar Springs, sixty miles south, near Lynchburg. The British detachment remained at Monticello eighteen hours, searching for prospective arrestees, then rejoined the frustrated Tarleton.

This Staunton to which the Virginia Assembly adjourned was far different from what it is today. Though small in area and in population, it had served since 1738 as capital or county

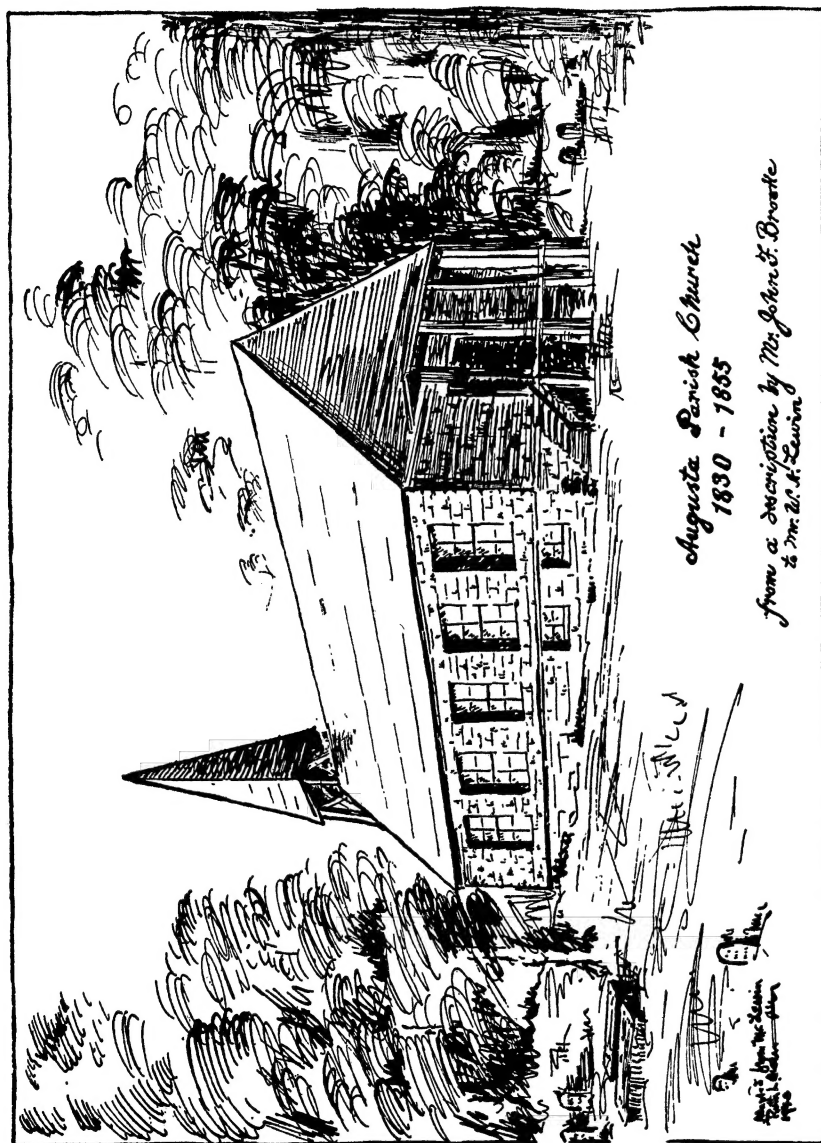
seat of the vast Augusta County, including what are now West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, parts of Michigan and Wisconsin, and all of southwest Virginia.

In early days this community had been known as Beverley's Mill Place; but in 1740 William Beverley, holder of a large tract known as Beverley's Manor, deeded eight acres for a town. Staunton was laid out in four blocks, each of two acres. There are no statistics for its population in 1781, but scarcely more than two or three hundred could have been dwelling in four town blocks. A significant number, however, lived in close proximity, especially to the east of town limits, where a new street, appropriately named New Street, had been laid out. The citizenry of Augusta County then are estimated to have been 60% Scotch-Irish, 20% German, 10% English, and 10% Negro.

Beverley also deeded some acreage east of town for a courthouse; and by 1761, when Staunton was finally chartered, a rude log courthouse had been erected, 11 by 18 feet, possessing two windows but no glass or shutters. Obviously so crude a structure was not adequate for Assembly sessions. But there was one adequate structure—the Augusta Parish Church, described as the most commodious and sumptuous west of the Blue Ridge. In 1750 Beverley had transferred to the Augusta Parish vestry a tract of 2½ acres west of town. Interestingly enough, the majority of these vestrymen were Presbyterians, simply because there were not a sufficient number of Church of England adherents available. At least, though, each could take the oath to abjure the Young Pretender, the Pope, and the doctrine of transubstantiation; and non-Episcopalians continued to serve on the vestry until 1774.

In 1760 the vestry had voted to erect a house of worship, and the building was completed in June 1763. It was of bricks laid in lime and was 40 by 25 feet, 16 feet to the eaves. When the building was finished, two of the vestrymen, Sampson Mathews and John Poague, voted against acceptance of the work, protesting that the bricks were defective. Yet those bricks were to survive seventy years, until 1833, when a new structure would be erected. The tower of the present Trinity Church stands on the site of the original Augusta Parish Church.

The cost of the finished building was 199 pounds, or \$1,633.33, at that time a bountiful sum for any edifice. Mr. Ballmaine, the curate, went into the army as chaplain, and no services were held there from 1775 to 1781. The structure was



The Second Building, 1830

Used by permission.

put to use in 1776 for freeholders to meet and consider their relation with England; and it was used subsequently for other patriotic gatherings. It was an appropriate site, therefore, for this assembling of Virginia's governmental body.

So there was Staunton, fourth capital of the sovereign Commonwealth of Virginia, seat of its august General Assembly. From existing records it is not possible to list definitely the lawmakers present for this session beginning June 7, 1781. Rosters show that total membership of 138 Delegates and 24 Senators. But history shows also that during this confused period, with lawgivers fleeing hither and yon, some seeking refuge for their families, some serving in the armed forces, it became so difficult to marshal an effective attendance that the House adopted a resolution proclaiming 50 members a quorum. There is one statement that the session in Augusta Parish Church at one time during its seventeen-day meeting had 63 Delegates and 21 Senators; yet that number inevitably would fluctuate from day to day.

There does exist a complete list of elected Delegates and Senators for the session of 1781, whether in attendance or not. For instance, it is certain that five of Virginia's seven signers of the Declaration of Independence were members of the legislative body. It is an intriguing fact that in 1781 all seven of Virginia's signers were in service of the Commonwealth, not of the nation—that all seven served in the legislative body of Virginia after leaving the Continental Congress. Naturally the question emerges—had this been some sort of demotion? And the answer is the obvious one—that under a very loose federation there were really thirteen sovereign nations lightly bound into a bargaining group that delegated to the central power only certain prerogatives. With the states jealously retaining much power, undoubtedly service for Virginia would also be considered exalted.

The five signers in the 1781 Virginia General Assembly were the two Lee brothers—Richard Henry and Francis Lightfoot—Carter Braxton, Benjamin Harrison, and Thomas Nelson. Thomas Jefferson was not present, because he had retreated to Poplar Springs and had recently resigned as Governor. The seventh signer, George Wythe, speaker of the House of Delegates only four years before, had been appointed to the Virginia Court of Chancery and recently was named to the Chair of Law in William and Mary College, the first professor of law in the nation.

It is certain that Benjamin Harrison was in attendance the entire time, presiding over the House of Delegates. A grandson of King Carter and therefore cousin to Carter Braxton and Mann Page, he was to be elected Governor the following November, to serve three terms. Among his many distinctions would be that of becoming ancestor of two Presidents of the United States.

That towering statesman, the American Cicero, Richard Henry Lee, was also in full attendance. He it was who had moved the Continental Congress June 7, 1776, that "these colonies are and of right ought to be free and independent states." Lee had lost use of one of his hands, which always was bound in a silken bandage, and he was called "the gentleman of the silver hand."

His brother, Francis Lightfoot Lee, was in the State Senate. Whether he was in attendance has not been established. Nor is it certain that Carter Braxton attended all the Staunton sessions; he had been seriously ill and may have been forced to avoid the hazard of travel to such remote parts. Thomas Nelson was in attendance at most but not all the meetings.

It is known, then, that on June 7 at least fifty legislators sat in the Augusta Parish Church, a legislature without a Governor. Thomas Jefferson had held that office since June 1779, succeeding Patrick Henry, who had served three terms of a year each, the maximum permitted. Jefferson had been reelected in 1780, and it was presumed that he, like Henry, would serve the third term. But his second term had been so arduous, so full of bickering with his lawmaking body that he resigned in June 1781. So shocked was the Assembly that it allowed itself to remain without an elected Governor for twelve days, until Tuesday, June 12. And during that Staunton session of June 12, the Assembly, irked at Jefferson, adopted a resolution, offered by Delegate George Nicholas, "Resolved, that at the next session of the Assembly an inquiry be made into the conduct of the Executive of this State for the last several months." Later in November a committee of which this same Nicholas was a member would report all the charges and rumors against Jefferson groundless.

During this absence or non-existence of a Governor, William Fleming, native Scotsman, filled the office as chairman of the Council of State. Often he is referred to as acting Governor from June 3 to June 12; in several documents he refers to himself as Lieutenant Governor. Fleming was an ex-Stauntonian, having

practiced medicine here from 1753 to 1769; he then had moved southwest and commanded the Botetourt regiment at the battle of Point Pleasant, where he was wounded severely.

There were many other such notables among these legislators. Patrick Henry, for eighteen years a leader against England's harshness, shone in full glory. He had been first Governor from Virginia's natal day, June 29, 1776; member of the first Continental Congress; and commander-in-chief of Virginia's military forces in 1775 and 1776. When the Delegates were bewilderedly wondering how the government could survive without a Governor and it was suggested that instead a dictator be appointed, it was evident that Patrick Henry was the one singled out.

George Nicholas it was who gained double prominence by first proposing a reprimand for ex-Governor Jefferson and later suggesting the dictator. The story is told that Archibald Cary, speaker of the Senate, upon encountering a relative of Henry on a Staunton street, shouted, "Sir, I am told that your brother wishes to be dictator. Tell him from me, that the day of his appointment shall be the day of his death, for he shall find a dagger in his heart before the sunset of that day."

Augusta County was represented by James Steele and Zachariah Johnston. It was Johnston who, at the Virginia Convention of 1788, would debate vigorously with Patrick Henry, Benjamin Harrison, and Carter Braxton, all three of whom opposed ratification of the Federal Constitution. And Johnston would marshal the votes of Valley Delegates to bring about Virginia's approval of that Constitution by the perilous margin of 89 to 79.

Quite obviously the Parish Church, no matter how well equipped, could not supply all needs of the legislators; and people of the community furnished chairs, benches, candles, desks, and stools. Trinity Church today treasures one of the walnut spindle chairs used by these Assemblymen. Nor were there housing facilities for so many, only a few rough and ill-appointed inns or ordinaries. In the past many of these lawgivers had lived here or visited in Staunton; and with traditional hospitality, they readily found accommodations in the homes of friends.

Records show that the body remained in session almost continuously during the first four days in Staunton. After all, none knew when the government might be forced to disperse again. And during those long sessions the group without a

Governor continued to pass laws, issue orders, draw up resolutions. So grave was the situation that the Assembly broke all precedent by convening on Sunday. It turned out to be a turbulent Sabbath. Rumors were flying around—news that two British spies had been apprehended only a few miles away and that one had confessed his crime before dying. On every hand militia assembled, and civilians thronged Rockfish Gap to keep the British from crossing the Blue Ridge.

The General Assembly adjourned late Sunday afternoon, June 10; and there is an array of fabulous tales—pictures of Assemblymen riding in mad flight toward Warm Springs, Patrick Henry losing his boot and continuing to flee bootless, lawgivers hiding in caverns, lurking in deep forests. It all frames an exciting story; but like many tales woven from threads of excitement, it will not bear close inspection. The legend of Henry and the lost boot was proved apocryphal many years ago and yet will not die. In actuality there was no sense of panic. It was only that the Assembly, after its long session, deemed it wise to recess for a day and to order reassembling Tuesday, designating the alternate site of Warm Springs in case a meeting at Augusta Parish Church proved impracticable.

So the lawmakers rode away. Fleming stayed with relatives north of town. Henry went to the house of his friend, George Moffett, at Mount Pleasant, nine miles northwest. Had they been travelling to Warm Springs, they would have pursued an opposite route, to the southwest.

By Monday it was recognized that no foe could possibly cross the Blue Ridge at Rockfish Gap, which was lined with three militia companies, a platoon of Continentals, and a horde of civilians, men and women, ready to hurl huge stones upon the unwary horsemen. The lawgivers reassembled in Augusta Parish Church Tuesday morning, June 12, and named as Governor Colonel Thomas Nelson, who was already commander of Virginia's military forces. He was sworn into office and within a month would take up residence in Richmond. He would enshrine his name in October by bidding General Washington fire on the Nelson mansion in Yorktown, then supposedly housing Cornwallis's staff members. But on November 29 he would resign as Governor because of bad health, to be succeeded by Benjamin Harrison.

On Thursday, June 14, the House of Delegates voted an award of two pistols and a sword to Captain Jack Jouett for his

ride to Charlottesville. On Saturday it adjourned at Augusta Parish Church, to meet in Richmond the first Monday in October, with alternate sites of Fredericksburg and Winchester in case the Richmond meeting remained impracticable.

Tarleton had left Charlottesville in early June and rejoined Cornwallis, who, confronted by a reinforced Lafayette, fell back to Richmond and after a few days even farther back toward the coast and his doom. But there would long remain in Staunton the warm and stirring recollections of those beautiful June days when it had been capital of the sovereign Commonwealth of Virginia. For years there would be happy narratives of those times when great and learned men, Harrison and Nelson and Henry and the Lees, had trodden the sacred walks of the town, while Augustans basked in the glory of it all.

The Jewish Community in Staunton

Fannie B. Strauss

In all probability very few Jews lived in Virginia during the last half of the eighteenth century and none in this section. Immigrants from a great many foreign countries settled in small towns, villages or on farms to raise cattle and horses or whatever proved profitable in that part of the land. Jewish immigrants, on the contrary, gravitated to the larger cities, turned to the needle trades or became peddlers, this latter leading to the establishing of their own stores as soon as possible.

To this part of Virginia the greatest influx of Jewish people seems to have been since 1850; they came, it appears, because of the agreeable surroundings and the excellent business opportunities afforded.

The following material has been taken from the records of the Staunton congregation kept through the years. According to these minutes the congregation, Temple House of Israel, was organized in 1876, though no date is mentioned regarding the coming of the first Jewish settlers to Augusta County nor to Staunton. However, prior to 1876 a club had been formed for social purposes and probably to orient the newcomers to the American way of life and to give charity to the needy. It is evident that immediately after the War Between the States, if not before, Jewish merchants were engaged in business here. The newly organized congregation held services in various places, at times in very disagreeable quarters where outside noises proved most disturbing.

In 1884, a committee was appointed to purchase a suitable place for worship and to fit it out properly. The property which became the first synagogue in Staunton, to serve Waynesboro as well, was located on the southwest end of Kalorama Street, at the top of the hill, opposite Stonewall Jackson Arms, now occupied by the W. L. Welcher Upholster Shop. The building was then known as Hoover School and was bought from a Mrs. F. T. Stribling at the cost of \$600.00. The amount was borrowed, not from a bank but from a business firm, Loeb Bros., and the note was to be met with gifts procured from friends and wholesale firms in the North by members when they traveled there for merchandise. The first report of money thus secured was



Major Alexander Hart, Staunton, Virginia, 1893. Augusta County. Served the congregation as president and minister from 1876-1894.

Used by permission of American Jewish Archives.

\$1,073.00. Another source of income was money raised from raffles, a popular method in those days of obtaining such for any and all needs. The first raffle was held in the City Council Chamber, conducted by Mr. W. P. Tams and Mr. Newton Argenbright; among the articles sold were: a silver tea set which brought \$50.00, a pair of opera glasses—\$12.00, and a gold-headed cane—\$5.00. The amount raised from this raffle was \$414.40. Pews could not yet be afforded, so chairs were borrowed for awhile. Evidently spittoons were deemed a necessity, supposedly placed in the vestibule. We still have and use in the Religious School Building the handmade altar which was made for the first synagogue here.

The first meeting held in the newly-equipped building was February 1, 1885. The organizer and president of the congregation was Major Alexander Hart, who conducted the regular services and gave a lecture at each. Mr. Louis Cohen read the Hebrew portions of the services.

We have President Hart's address delivered at the first meeting (as follows):

"Our situation this morning brings forcibly to mind the period and hour when the Ark with the Ten Commandments was conveyed to the great Temple in Jerusalem. Biblical history informs us that after Moses returned from his interview with the Almighty in the mountain, bringing with him the Commandments, the Israelites gave freely their jewelry and cherished treasures and also their labor to build a shelter for the inestimable gift of God; and that when the sheltered Ark was completed the Commandments were conveyed from place to place as the Israelites journeyed by command of God. When David, whose veneration and gratitude to the Almighty were profound, ascended the throne as King of Israel, his first thought was to testify his piety and gratefulness by the erection of a dwelling suitable for the Commandments, and David arranged for the building of the magnificent Temple and left its completion as a legacy to his son Solomon. The Temple was completed in all its grandeur and beauty. With music, singing and every possible rejoicing the Ark was placed in its resting place."

Alexander Hart was born in New Orleans October 1, 1839. At the outbreak of the Civil War he enlisted in the 5th Louisiana Regiment, in which he rose to the rank of Major. He was captured by Union forces and imprisoned for awhile. Serious wounds led to hospitalization in Richmond, where he was exchanged for

Yankee prisoners-of-war. There he met and married, on August 15, 1866, Leonora Levy; shortly after their marriage they moved to Staunton where he engaged in business (general merchandise) until 1894 when failure of certain investments led him to seek his fortune in Norfolk, Virginia. He had served as leader of the Staunton congregation for 18 years. In Norfolk he died September 21, 1911.

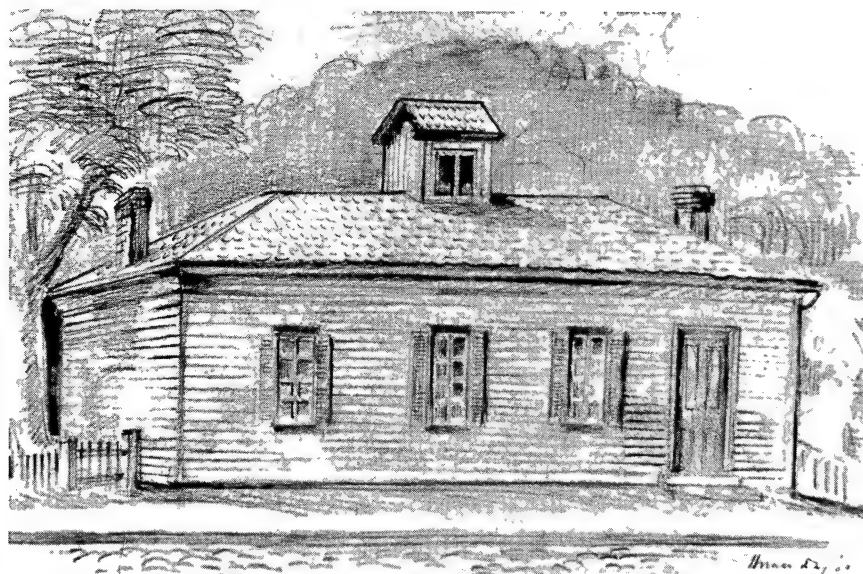
It is interesting to note the salaries paid in the early days: the janitor received \$2.50 a month, later increased to \$3.00; the organist \$4.00. A Sunday School was mentioned in the November 1885 minutes but the name of the teacher not given; however, in 1895 a Miss Switzer and Miss Josie Loeb were in charge.

In April 1855, a committee had been appointed to find out the cost and location of a suitable burying ground. The land which seemed best suited was owned by a Mr. E. T. Dudley, located about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the city limits on the Valley Pike (now North Augusta Street) and contained $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres. Mr. Dudley was most generous in his terms and the final purchase was made in June 1886. One item noted in the minutes at this time is the livery bill of \$4.50 presented by the cemetery committee.

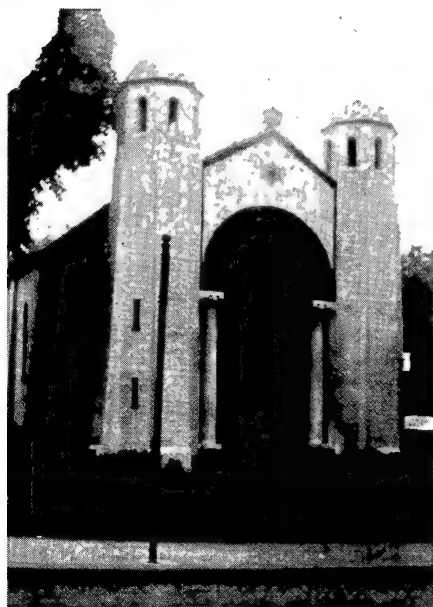
The first burial recorded was a son of Mr. Abe Switzer, May 1887, but there is no stone in that family lot indicating name of boy or exact date of death. However, according to the tombstone, Mrs. Samuel Shultz died in 1879. In all probability the body was buried elsewhere first. Since the family did not come here (from Poughkeepsie, New York) until several years later, the body was then reburied.

After Major Hart left Staunton, the religious services were conducted by lay members until 1937, when this congregation and the Harrisonburg congregation shared the services of a resident Rabbi—Leonard Rothstein. For many years before this, a visiting rabbi conducted the services for the holidays and any special occasions, as well as weddings and funerals. The first wedding held in the Kalorama Street building was that of Madeline Barth and Albert Shultz, June 1897.

By the fall of 1924 the old place of worship had become inadequate and the decision was made to buy a lot on which to construct a new Temple. The old building was sold to Mr. Montague Payne, who graciously permitted the congregation the continued use of the building. A lot situated on the east side of North Market Street was purchased from Mary Baldwin



Exterior of First Temple used from 1884 to 1925. Corner Market and Kalorama Streets.



Exterior of Temple, built in 1925. North Market Street.

College. Extensive study was made of small houses of worship in the East of Biblical times. Adapting the results of this study to the needs of the congregation and the terrain of the site which had been selected, plans for the new Temple were drawn. The cornerstone was laid in 1925 by the Masonic Lodge of Staunton.

Now let's turn our attention to some of the early Jewish settlers here:

In the late 1870's, when the streetcar was the chief mode of public transportation, the horse and buggy the only private conveyance, the telephone non-existent or just a luxury, not a necessity, the drug store sold only drugs, a supermarket unheard of, as groceries were purchased at a grocery store and farm produce from market stalls, there was a store in Staunton known as "Augusta Clothing Hall," situated on the corner opposite "Court House Square," which had been opened by Simon Barth in the early 1870's. The owner died and his brother, Joseph L. Barth, took over the business in 1881. The name was then changed to "Barth Clothing Store." A year later L. G. Strauss, a native of South Carolina, came here as a clerk in the store. He had spent a year teaching in a small town in Texas and wanted a change. Noting an advertisement in a trade magazine, he applied for the job and it was his. Mr. Barth met his new clerk at the railroad station—to meet the same train was the owner of another local store, who tried by every known means to hire Mr. Strauss for his store! It didn't work! Clerks were evidently hard to come by in those days! In 1890 Mr. Strauss married Mr. Barth's sister. By that time the name of the store had become "J. L. Barth and Company."

On a Sunday morning in the spring of 1895 a young man got off the train on which he had traveled from Baltimore. He walked north on Augusta Street; at the corner of Main Street (now Beverley) he saw the chief of police (his badge indicated his rank); he asked where there was a vacant store; when the policeman learned that the stranger wanted to open a clothing store, he replied something to this effect: "Mr., there's a train back to Baltimore tonight and you better take it. You couldn't do any business here; a Mr. Barth has all the men's trade tied up throughout this area." Undaunted, Abraham Weinberg opened "Weinberg Clothing Company" in May of that year, also on South Augusta Street, where the Planters Bank now stands; later moved to the northern end of the same block. In 1897 he married another sister of Mr. Barth!

In 1911 for economic reasons and because of family connections, the owners decided to consolidate the two firms under the name of "Barth, Weinberg and Company," located where the store still stands, though it is no longer owned by any of the family.

Loeb Bros. was another store opened by three brothers in the late 1870's or early 1880's. It was what was in those days just called a "Dry Goods Store," situated always at the same location — corner of New and Main Streets; even today "Loeb Bros." is visible in the pavement, left from those long-ago days.

In October 1889, Mr. Louis Summerfield opened a store which handled "Ladies Ready to Wear and Hats" and the store was from that time on, even today, known as the "Palais Royal." Several years later, his brother-in-law, Mr. Louis Davidson, opened a similar store, known as "The American Stock Co." The two stores consolidated, at first using the combined names and located at 25 West Main Street. In 1898 the Palais Royal was doing business at 10-12 East Main Street, where the Beverley Restaurant now stands. The present owner, Mr. S. J. Sachs, bought the business in January 1913.

Mr. Albert Shultz opened a bookstore at 10 West Main Street in the early 1890's; soon a printing press (thought to be the first here not connected with any newspaper) was added. The 1898-1899 Mary Baldwin yearbook (*The Mary Baldwin Souvenir*) was published by Mr. Shultz, as were several others to follow. The printing department was moved to 7 South New Street; among the first regular books to come off that press were two children's books by Mr. Henry Tinsley: *Little Tommy Stuffin* (a story for bad little boys) and *Patsy Bolivar* (the same for bad little girls of Staunton). The bookstore was sold to Caldwell-Sites and Company, and the printing business later became The McClure Company. Under Mr. Shultz's management Staunton's first "opera house" was in the City Hall. Many weekly stock companies and one-night stand plays made their appearances here. In 1913 the New Theatre was built and owned by Mr. Shultz (now the Dixie Theater) which featured vaudeville in its heyday and the then-becoming popular movies.

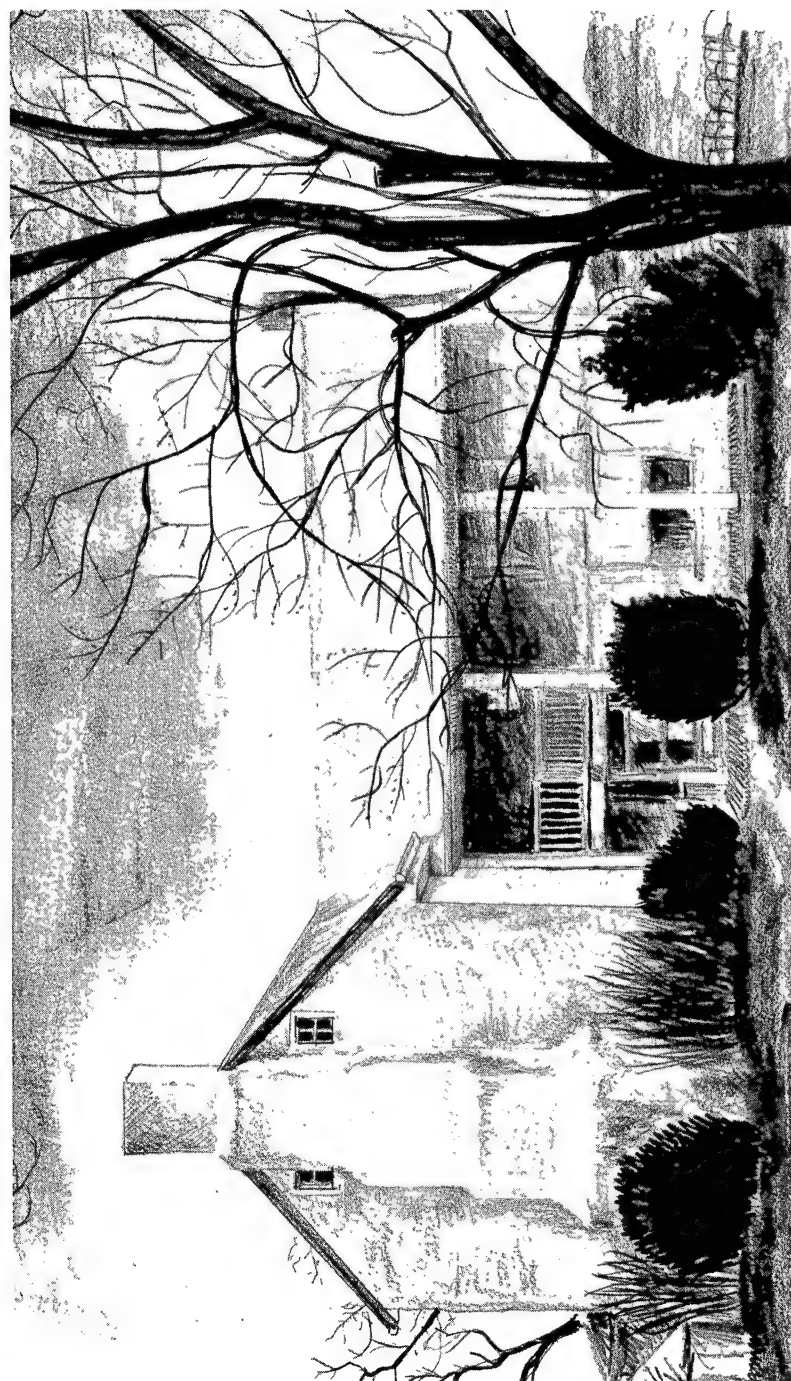
Cohen's Restaurant opened on South New Street, thought to be the first "family" eating place in Staunton. The exact date is not known though the elder Mr. Cohen lived here in the early 1880's.

Switzer and Grubert was the sign outside a jewelry store in 1900; however, in 1901 only D. L. Switzer's name remained. This store was also on Main Street and the address in 1911 was 3 East Main.

A real Delicatessen Shop first opened its doors here in 1905 and it was something entirely new for this part of Virginia. That was the kind of place one visited in the large cities and brought back to the "stay-at-homes" a most welcome gift of unusual foods. Mr. Joseph Loewner was the genial host and one felt that the word "host" could well be used to describe him.

Some of us may remember a store on South Augusta Street which was known as Flavin and Watson; somewhere in the early 1880's that place of business was opened by a Mr. Emile Hageman and was a popular place from which to buy wood or coal stoves, not only for the kitchen but for as many rooms in the home as the owner could afford and, of course, for school-rooms as well. Stovepipes, scuttles, shovels and many other things which to us today seem almost antiques were necessary commodities in those early years.

The Jewish community in Staunton and in Waynesboro has always been a comparatively small one, the reason for which seems obscure. Other localities in Virginia seem to have beckoned the immigrants and newcomers but those who did settle here quickly became part of the community, with its growth and welfare at heart.



Old Stone Fort, Zechariah Johnston Home. Addition on the right added 100 years after first part.
Drawing by William Bushman

Zechariah Johnston

A Virginia Champion of Freedom

Howard McKnight Wilson

Zechariah* Johnston was more fortunate than most boys of his day in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia; there was near-by a schoolhouse and a meeting house that had a settled minister. The Valley was called "A wilderness in a proper sense," without roads and with Indians traveling freely among the settlers along animal trails.

His parents, William and Anne Johnston, had been migrants for some years. Though of Scottish descent, they came from Ireland to New Hampshire, then were in West Nottingham, Maryland, for about two years before settling on Long Meadow Run, east of Barren Ridge in Augusta County. Knowing that Virginia sought frontier settlers, they became "squatters," or possibly "tenants at will," without title on unoccupied land. Though the area had "few Christians Settled in it," the Johnston family, who had proved their importation on July 24, 1740, had in hand at the earliest opportunity their certificate of transfer of church membership, recommending them as "free of all publick scandall or Church Cens'r." Little Zechariah was presented for baptism at the meeting house on September 26, 1742.

After residing in the area for approximately a decade, William Johnston, Zechariah's father, and William Wright, a part-time schoolmaster, secured their land titles from William Beverley early in 1749 within a week of each other. Joint planning seems evident from the equal division of an irregular rectangular shaped tract of 850 acres, lying astride Barren Ridge, into four sectors, two tracts for each in diagonal corners, totaling 425 acres each. These families had certainly joined others in building a schoolhouse, about two miles to the east, that was in use in 1747. It was located about three miles west of present Waynesboro at the foot of McClure Hill near the present "White Bridge" over the railroad. The records show that William Johnston paid William Wright for work as a schoolmaster—it is supposed that his teaching was in the nearby schoolhouse.

*This spelling is used because it is the way he signed his name.

Beginning in this "Old Field School," as these privately supported schools came to be called, Zechariah Johnston, presumably with special help from William Wright, prepared himself to enter Augusta Academy. It was run by Rev. John Brown just outside the village of present Fairfield. But then came the French and Indian War in which William Johnston was often on active duty, and Zechariah, growing into manhood, quit school, married Ann Robertson, and took over the work on his father's farm on Beaver (Long Meadow) Run.

Archibald Alexander, from his childhood in Rockbridge County, knew Johnston personally when he was the leading representative statesman of Western Virginia. Dr. Alexander, who had served as president of Hampden Sydney College and helped found and became the first professor in Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey, relied on his remarkable memory to write for the first volume of *The Princeton Magazine* in 1850 an article on Zechariah Johnston, saying:

Among the distinguished Virginians brought out by the American revolution was Zachariah Johnston, a plain farmer of Augusta, who had received no other education than what a common English school could afford. When "Committees of Safety" were appointed in every district, he was by the recommendation of his neighbours, made a member of the committee for his native county. In this office he discovered so much good sense, and such ability to express his opinions with clearness and force, that he was persuaded to become a candidate for a seat in the Virginia legislature. When he entered that body, no one expected that a plain, uneducated farmer would undertake to make speeches on the same floor with many of the greatest men whom the state ever produced; but Johnston, conscious of his own power, was not long a member before he astonished the whole house by delivering on an important occasion, a speech without embarrassment, in which he exhibited his views with the utmost perspicuity and energy. No man in the Assembly was more fluent, or expressed himself in more proper language than Zachariah Johnston. He did not speak often, but when important subjects were brought before the house, he commonly delivered at least one speech; and no man in the Assembly, unless we except Patrick Henry, commanded the attention of the members in a greater degree than the backwoods farmer.

The people of the Valley, or country west of the Blue Ridge, being of a different stock, and of different habits and manners from the Old Virginians, who were of English descent, have always manifested some jealousy, because in the laws enacted there frequently was not an impartial regard to their interests,

and Johnston being a representative of this region, when any subject touching the interests of his constituents came up, was always ready with uncompromising firmness to defend their cause. . . .

The people of the valley were proud of their champion, as well they might be. What gave force to his eloquence was his pure and incorruptible integrity. He was a man of sterling honesty and undoubted patriotism. Indeed, he was a strictly religious man, and was not ashamed of his profession of Christianity. . . . He continued to represent the county of Augusta, every year until the contest with the mother country was brought to a termination; and no one thought of opposing his election. Like most other eloquent men, Zachariah Johnston excelled in his conversational powers. And when in the country, people would be met at church, before the worship commenced, he would commonly have a large group around him listening to his discourse. On one of these occasions, the writer was among his hearers. . . .

It was a common report, that he was never seen to smile. Whether this was true I cannot tell; but being present when the students of an academy acted (as was then common) a ludicrous farce, while the rest of the audience were convulsed with laughter, Zachariah Johnston was not observed to relax a muscle of his face.

Johnston was a member of the Virginia convention, which adopted the federal constitution. In that august assembly he remained silent, until near the close of the debates, when he arose and delivered a short, sensible discourse in favour of the constitution; the substance of which may be found in the printed Debates of the Convention.

Zechariah Johnston at an early date built a stone home on the family farm north of Fishersville. It was referred to as "the Barrens" or "Stone Fort." The latter it was, when first constructed, with small head-high windows on the first floor. The late Percy G. Hanger, whose father once owned the house, and the Grayson Grove family, the present owners, have related family traditions of huge seven foot rocks being encountered in cutting a door between rooms and lowering the window openings to normal size after the need for fortification had passed. Unmistakable evidence of very early construction show at present in the rafters, sheeting for the roof, and the remaining old wooden shingles. The rafters and braces are bound together, and the first roofing of handsplit shingles was put on, with wooden pegs and handmade nails as shown in the illustrations.



Pegged wall in attic of Johnston Home.

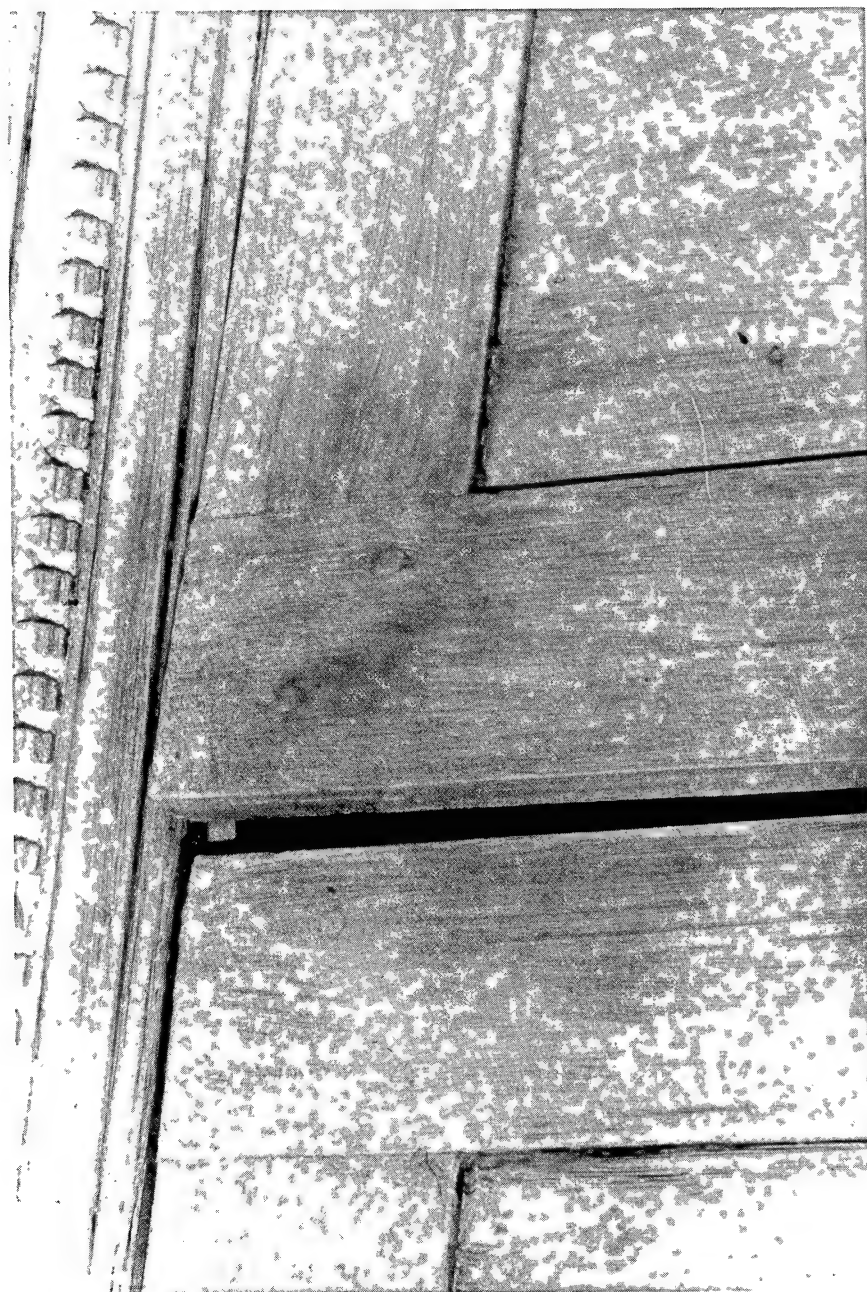
Photograph by David L. Bushman

Following his most notable days of service for Virginia, Zechariah Johnston moved with his family to a new stone home on Providence Hill just outside Lexington in Rockbridge County.

It was the writer's privilege to have made the acquaintance of the Misses Johnston, the last of Zechariah's descendants by that name to occupy the home in Rockbridge. Out of that contact in 1952 came the permanent photostatic copy of the "Zachariah Johnston Papers, 1742-1856," consisting of 369 photoprints, now in the Virginia State Library in Richmond. Incidentally an exchange copy, given by the library, was bound by and placed in the archives of the Augusta County Historical Society. The late William J. Van Schreeven, Virginia State Archivist for a quarter century, said after making a copy of this collection that it was one of the most valuable entries the state archives had received in many years, his reason being that it detailed the efforts made by a notable Western Virginian for liberty in one of the headwaters of American freedom. It is significant that, in addition to many letters to and from the family and associates in the Valley of Virginia, there are in the Johnston Papers letters from nationally known Virginians, namely, Thomas Jefferson, Henry Lee, John Marshall, George Mason, James Monroe, and Edmund Randolph.

It has been asked, why give special attention now to Zechariah Johnston, since so little has been said about him in the past? In the words of a scholarly historian of Virginia, the answer is that he "played a more important role than he is usually credited with." That role was in accord with most Virginians in their support of leaders like Patrick Henry in aggressively prosecuting the Revolutionary War. However, his role became very meaningful in specifying the forms of freedom when Johnston gave necessary and crucial support to men like Thomas Jefferson and James Madison—and made contributions of his own—in enacting the principles of true freedom instead of toleration and in Virginia's adopting the federal constitution.

During the war years Johnston played a modest role. After serving first on the Committee of Safety, he later went on duty in the army. In spite of the loss of his military record, it is learned from Revolutionary Declarations by Augusta County men that in 1776 he was an ensign with Captain William Christian's company when it marched against and burned the "Indian Towns" beyond the French Broad River. Johnston was sworn in as captain in the county militia on August 20, 1777, and his



Hand pegged cupboard in the parlor.
Photograph by David L. Bushman

company was recorded as on duty on the West Fork of the Monongehela in October 1779.

Waddell's *Annals of Augusta County* tell of a militia court-martial at the courthouse in which on "October 24, 1780, six captains were fined 10 each for not returning rolls of their respective companies. Zachariah Johnston, a member of the court was one of the delinquents, and forthwith paid his fine," no excuse given. Another declaration supplies the information that Johnston's cavalry company was a part of the force that pursued the British in 1781 from Richmond by way of Williamsburg and attacked them as they passed across Jamestown Island, "with many killed on both sides."

A public accusation against Johnston was handled by the legislature when it met in Staunton. With Tarleton in pursuit, the majority of the Virginia Legislature escaped capture in Charlottesville early in June 1781 and reassembled on June 12th at Trinity Church in Staunton. In view of the trouble in raising troops in Augusta County the previous month, Thomas Hughes had accused Johnston of instigating opposition to the Assembly troop plan. On June 14th Patrick Henry reported to the Assembly that the accusation was groundless. It is said that Johnston resigned his militia captaincy in 1782.

Johnston was noted for his honesty but he was frugal in his dealings, as is exemplified in a specific trade. When drastic currency fluctuation brought him severe loss, he wrote, January 3, 1780, to the other party:

You were so far from Bringing your gaine and my Loss to any Compromize, You Rather thought it a piece of good fortune to have it in your power to pocket Seven or Eight hundred pounds of my Estate Without any adequate Value. . . . Suffer me to tell you God Looks on the Actions of men and Sees Exactly the principle from which they Act. . . . I am Sir not any thing affraid to Subscribe myself to these Lines and stand over them to your face any Day if you wany any farther Explanation — Zechariah Johnston.

On the other hand, after a sharp difference with a neighbor over the county surveyor's re-establishment of one of his original boundary lines, he sent a notice of his purpose to recover use of the disputed land by law — then added: ". . . but instead of this if you will Let us in peace move our fence to the Line I will agree to bury all by gone and be a neighbor if you will be one—and hope you will See it the Same way. I at present Subscribe myself your humble Servant — Zechariah Johnston."



All handmade pegs and handmade nails.
Photograph by David L. Bushman



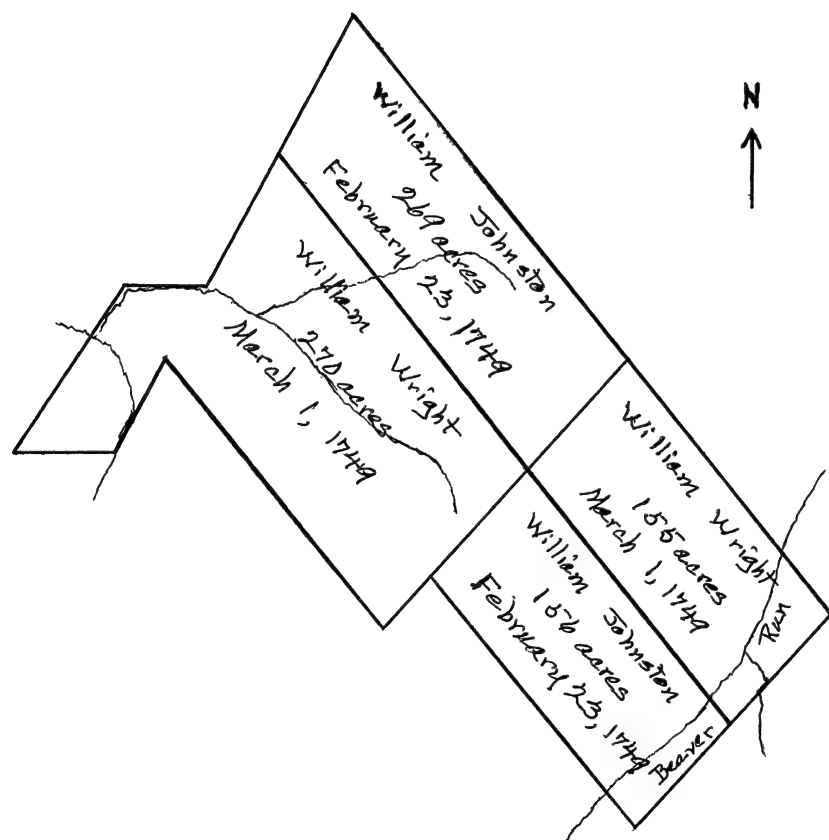
Hand cut shingle—pegged. Has been used twice. Turned over and nailed.
 Nails shown above thumb.
Photograph by David L. Bushman

Though he is described as never smiling, Mr. M. W. Paxton, Jr., in "Zachariah Johnston of Augusta and Rockbridge and His Times," relates a family story:

He was not altogether devoid of a sense of humor. On one occasion, the governor of Virginia was dining at the Johnston home. A fat turkey sat on the platter before the host and without waiting for the host to carve, the governor took his knife, reached over and cut off a large portion, and deposited it on his own plate. Whether he sought to embarrass his host or had some other motive is not known, but the host was equal to the occasion, and passing the platter to the next guest exclaimed: "Help yourself, governor fashion."

The sterling honesty of this man in word and deed cannot be questioned. Though determined and firm, he was warm-hearted and devout. Naturally it was to his family that he wrote intimately of the faith that motivated his principles. When on a hazardous trip exploring western lands, he wrote his wife: "My Dear—falls of the Ohio May ye 11th 1784 . . . I intend to morrow Pleas God to take my journey by water to the Massipie About six or seven hundred miles . . . & Locate my Lands." After earnestly recommending private and family devotions, he continued in marked contrast to the prevailing beliefs of many of his fellow-legislators in Richmond: "Remember the Door of mercy Stands open with this Inscription Whosoever will Let him Come, the Blessed Jesus hath Shed his Blood to Render it Accessible to you, Exalted Privilege! . . . the Rewards of Virtue Shall attend you through Life & Crown you with Eternal happiness at Last Which is the Constant Desire of him Who Remains your faithful and Affectionate Friend till Death."

Three years later Johnston wrote his wife from Richmond: "Dearest Companion . . . these with my best regards to you & all the rest Comes to inform you that I am through Mercy in A tolerable State of health & hopes these may find you all in Like Precious Enjoyment . . . mark I Beseech you the footsteps of Jesus." He admonished, "Continually wait at the footstool of his mercy and try by faith to View the Great Advocate with the father as the Great meritorious foundation of all our Acceptance." To those of the eleven children at home (the youngest of whom was then four) he added, "remember oh! my Dear Children in these Days of youth that Council in the 12 Chapter of Ecclesiastus Seek & you Shall find Especially if you Seek Early since god is the Giver and free Grace the gift." He concluded,



The unusual arrangement of Johnston-Wright Land.

"I have nothing of A publick Nature to relate worth while but our New Confederated Constitution I find has its friends and its Enemies I Conclude & remain [an] Affection[ate] husband untill Death Dissolve these Natural ties."

Zechariah Johnston's Christian training in the church was first under the old-timer, Parson John Craig, and as an adult under the noted preacher and ardent patriot, James Waddell, later widely known as "The Blind Preacher," after cataracts had taken his sight. Zechariah was a stickler in his church obligations as he was in other matters. A receipt from James Frazer, the treasurer at Tinkling Spring, reads:

Received of Zechariah Johnston ye sum of two pounds Eight shillings By way of stipend For ye Revd. James Waddel For ye year 1778 and also two Dollars Gratis to Mr. Craig's Heirs which Clears ye sd Johnston of all Debts Dues and Demand From or By ye sd Mr. Waddel From the Beginning of the World to this Day given under my hand this 28th of aprile 1779.

The battle cry of the Revolution could have been given in one word, "Rights." Both natural and religious rights were involved; and the latter in particular brought on a confrontation between the old establishment and the more aggressive revolutionaries. To understand the intensity of that conflict at the time Zechariah Johnston was moved into the center of it in 1784, it is necessary to review the political background. Thomas Jefferson had worked openly for natural rights since the publication in 1774 of his paper, *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*. The 1776 Bill of Rights, drafted by George Mason, ending with a section on religion (which is said to have been contributed by Patrick Henry and amended by James Madison), declared that "all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion according to the dictates of conscience." The chairmanship of the Virginia House Committee on Religion in 1776 went to Jefferson and he introduced legislation for religious liberty but the General Assembly moved only to extend toleration. It was followed by a counter proposal to tax all the people for all of the churches in a "General Assessment."

The dissenters were unhappy over the compromise of religious liberty for they wanted the Church Establishment abolished and "EQUAL LIBERTY!" instituted for all. This was inevitably one of the issues in the political turnover in Augusta

County in 1778 that put Zechariah Johnston in the legislature to speak for the dissenters. When Jefferson introduced in 1779 legislation on religious liberty it resulted in repealing Anglican salary payments by the state but, it is said, "disorganization of religious life . . . and growing laxity . . . brought insistent demands for some form of state regulation or support of religion." Dr. George M. Brydon, Virginia's Anglican historian, continued, "Bills were introduced, for assessment, and for a new marriage law, only to be brought to a third reading and then postponed."

The Presbytery of Hanover (the official Presbyterian court for Virginia), assembled on April 25, 1780, at Tinkling Spring Church in Augusta County, records the last session at the home of Rev. James Waddell on the morning of the 28th. Evidently Waddell and others had prepared the night before the final item which Presbytery approved:

A Memorial to the Assembly of Virginia, from this Presbytery to abstain from interfering in the government of the Church, was prepared, and being read in Pby, is appointed and directed to be transmitted to the House. . . . The Pby do request Col. McDowell and Capt. Johnson [Johnston] to present their Memorial to the Assembly and to second it by their Influence, and Mr. Waddell and Mr. Graham are appointed to inform these Gentlemen of the Request of Presbytery.

The people and leaders in the colonies continued after the Yorktown surrender to intensify the search for equal liberty and plan for constitutional government. Virginia was in the forefront of the search but with two opposing fields of thought. It was in those days that Zechariah Johnston became a leader among the representatives of Western Virginia sentiment. He was a personal friend and political ally of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. On the subject of a General Assessment upon the people for the ministers' salaries of all churches and on certain state affairs—such as paper money, British debt, and the form of the federal constitution—Patrick Henry, George Mason and others took positions which Jefferson and his political allies opposed. The very high regard of Jefferson for Johnston is made crystal clear in the following letter.

Monticello Octob. 7, 1790.

Dear Sir

As the assembly will soon meet; I presume you will be passing down to it a few days before. I shall be at home

at that time, and will always be glad to see you here when I am here; but particularly I wish it at this time, as it is highly interesting to our country that it should take up a particular matter now in its power, and which never will be so again. This subject can only be opened in private conference. Knowing the weight you have justly acquired with our public councils, & your zeal to promote the public interests I have taken the liberty of asking to see you on your way down. My house will be a convenient stage for you the first day, and if you can have time to tarry a day with me it will be very desirable to me, and I trust not unfruitful for our state in general & our particular part of it. I am with great esteem, Dear Sir,

Your most obedt. humble servt.

T. Jefferson

Mr. Zachariah Johnson

The Virginia General Assembly had scarcely recognized Western Virginia leadership before but in 1785 Zechariah Johnston was chosen in the House of Delegates to be Chairman of the Committee on Religion, said to have been always first on the list of committees during this period. The in-depth study, *The Valley of Virginia in the American Revolution*, by Freeman H. Hart, says:

It is not surprising then to find Madison a few years later demanding that religious *liberty* be substituted for religious *toleration* in George Mason's Virginia Bill of Rights. In the controversy between 1784 and 1786, which resulted in the Virginia Statute for Religious Liberty, it was Madison and his lieutenant, the Scottish Presbyterian Zachariah Johnston, who bore the brunt of the fight for religious liberty and equality.

Hugh Blair Grigsby in an address on Johnston, delivered at Washington & Lee in 1870, observed that, "It is well known that Mr. Jefferson, when he withdrew from the House to embark for France, left the care of the revised bills to Mr. Madison. . . . He had indeed most strenuous coadjutors, and among these was Zachariah Johnston. His simple and unadorned but caustic and fearless logic . . . was ever ready and was always effective."

When the Presbytery of Hanover went on record specifying five conditions that were imperative if a general assessment was imposed for the support of religion, it was thought by many (including James Madison) that they were faltering in support

of freedom for all. On the other hand the population was stirred by this report to increased action. The Presbyterians held a convention for all citizens, with a reputed attendance of 10,000, in August 1785 where they set forth their disapproval of the assessment bill as a "direct violation of the Declaration of Rights." And Madison prepared a remonstrance, thought by Freeman H. Hart to be "the ablest paper ever penned by a Virginian on separation of church and state," against the assessment bill. It was widely circulated and signed by thousands of people.

Efforts of this kind brought to the Assembly, within a ninety day period, seventy-five extensively signed petitions against assessment. As a result, the general assessment bill was abandoned without a struggle and James Madison reintroduced Jefferson's "Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom." Grigsby tells us that, for the dissenters, Johnston climaxed all their arguments by a personal testimony, as he addressed the chair:

Mr. Chairman, I am a Presbyterian, a rigid Presbyterian, as we are called; my parents before me were of the same profession; I was educated in that line. Since I became a man, I have examined for myself, and I have seen no cause to dissent. But, sir, the very day that the Presbyterians shall be established by law, and become a body politic, the same day Zechariah Johnston will be a dissenter. Dissent from that religion I cannot in honesty, but from that establishment I will.

A later major contribution of Zechariah Johnston to his state was the part he played in Virginia's ratification of the new federal constitution in 1788. The "Virginia Plan," proposing a strong central government, had prevailed at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787. But there was opposition to it in Virginia, exemplified in the Valley by Rev. William Graham, principal of Liberty Hall Academy in Lexington.

In Augusta County Johnston and Archibald Stuart, both strong federalists, were elected to the state convention, joining men of like opinion from all the counties from Botetourt to Frederick. Though Graham was defeated as a candidate to the convention from Rockbridge, he continued his efforts with zeal (in line with the leaders, Patrick Henry and George Mason) for Virginia to hold the right to lay her own taxes and to regulate her own trade at her own discretion. Graham went so far as to write Johnston suggesting that they get together on ways of opposing ratification of the constitution until amended.

The Valley, with Virginia including the area of present West Virginia and Kentucky, was in the position of holding the balance of power, with the remainder of the state lined up seventy-nine to seventy-five against ratification. In the Valley delegation, considering previous legislative and political experience, Zechariah Johnston was the dominant figure. His prestige was further enhanced by his close association and friendship with such statesmen and state leaders as Jefferson and Madison. Only three speeches of consequence were made in the Virginia Convention by Valley delegates; one of these was by Johnston in the closing hours of the convention. He addressed the chair:

Mr. Chairman—I am now called upon to decide the greatest of all questions—a question which may involve the felicity or misery of myself and posterity. . . . When I view the necessity of government among mankind and its happy operation when judiciously constructed, and when I view the principles of this constitution, and the satisfactory and liberal manner in which they have been developed by the gentleman in the Chair, and several other gentlemen, and when I view on the other hand, the strained construction which has been put, by the gentlemen on the other side [Patrick Henry and others] on every word and syllable, in endeavouring to prove oppressions which can never possibly happen, my judgment is convinced of the safety and propriety of this system.

Johnston went on to discuss many of the issues of the day, such as representation, regulation of the militia, religious freedom, taxation, utility of the constitution as written, properly placed responsibility, the bill of rights, emancipation of slaves, and concluded with these words: "Under these impressions, and for these reasons, I am for adopting the constitution without previous amendment. I will go any length afterward to reconcile it to gentlemen by proposing amendments."

Students of Johnston's life and his part in the debate, as recorded by David Robertson, *Debates and other Proceedings of the Convention of Virginia, 1788*, believe he climaxed his great career and gave the decisive word that assured Virginia's ratification of the constitution without amendment. He and his thirteen colleagues from the Valley, unanimous for ratification, tipped the scales to a majority vote of eighty-nine to seventy-nine for approval of the Federal Constitution of the United States.

The victory was duly celebrated in the Valley, according to the *Virginia Chronicle* (Richmond). Staunton and Augusta

County's festivities included a bonfire, military "evolutions," "illuminated" houses and the Masonic Hall. A spirit of harmony in "republicanism" was the order of the day. The Staunton authorities marked the day permanently by renaming one of its thoroughfares Federal Street.

The interest of Johnston in economic affairs is worthy of note. He was active in promoting payment of British debts and at the same time wrestling with the problem of the new currency and debt-ridden business men. He showed an active interest in trying to open the James and Shenandoah rivers to navigation for an outlet for Western Virginia trade. Meanwhile, he had not neglected his personal business. Gradually, through frugality and grants for military service, he was building a creditable landed estate. It was found later, when his will was probated, that he owned in the Valley four plantations and in Kentucky a 1,000 acre tract, plus half interest in 14,000 acres.

The *Calendar of Virginia State Papers* tells of Johnston being one of the ten electors from Virginia who in February 1789 cast a unanimous ballot to make George Washington the first President of the United States. He was also on the House of Delegates Committee that chose Virginia's first two Commonwealth Senators to Congress. Arthur Campbell, who also had earned considerable credit for his Revolutionary activities, wrote Johnston from Washington County in 1792 and the question he posed pays high tribute to Johnston:

Jany. 5, 1792

Dear Sir

It seems to be the wish of the people in this part of the District that some person out of this quarter should be elected as an additional Member of Congress under the late law. And a number of my friends has intimated a desire that I should offer. In this I cannot so readily determine until I know whether you have any intention to offer; because I have too high an opinion of your abilities to offer myself in opposition to one who has so long served the public with approbation. . .

I therefore have to intreat you as my best friend to write to me your sentiments freely and you may be assured it will have the greatest weight in determining the part that I shall act.

I am Sir, with great Regard,
Your most obedient servt.
Arthur Campbell

Zechariah Johnston did not run for Congress. Instead, having been re-elected to the House of Delegates — this time from Rockbridge—he sold his Stone Fort home near Fishersville and moved in 1793 to "Providence Hill," near Lexington. He became a trustee of Washington College, was re-elected the last time to the House in 1797, and, three years later, died January 7, 1800, in his fifty-seventh year. He was a modest man, saying, "The most I can claim, or flatter myself with, is to be of the middle rank," but in the words of his contemporary, Archibald Alexander, he was indeed the champion of liberty and equality for the Valley of Virginia.

As Augusta County, Staunton, and Waynesboro look forward to the Bicentennial Celebration in 1976, may we cherish and promote this heritage of equal liberty for all.

Principal sources: Zachariah Johnston Papers, 1742-1856 (photostats, Virginia State Library); Freeman H. Hart, *The Valley of Virginia in the American Revolution, 1763-1789* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1942); Howard McKnight Wilson, *The Tinkling Spring: Headwater of Freedom* (Richmond, 1954).



Soldier Section in Thornrose Cemetery. In this section rest the remains of more than 3,000 Confederate Soldiers. Is Richard C. Bridges' grave among these unknown dead?

Picture from "Beautiful Thornrose"

THREE QUESTIONS

Richard M. Hamrick, Jr.

Does some Augusta County Family have in its "family archives" a lock of hair and a man's black ring, and are not sure exactly where they came from, or to whom they belonged?

Richard C. Bridges, whose home was between Crystal Springs and Rockport, Mississippi, enlisted in the "University Blues" Company at the University of Mississippi at Oxford on April 26, 1861. He was twenty-one at the time. During the next three years he wrote many letters home, several of which are in the possession of Mrs. George Batton of Crystal Springs. Of the series, only two concern us. We thank Mrs. Batton for her permission to use the letters; Mr. William L. Huettel of Memphis, Tennessee, the author, and the Mississippi Historical Society for permission to abridge material in an article from the *Journal of Mississippi History*, Vol. XXXIII, November 1971.

On May 1, 1861, the University Blues, some 79 strong, moved to Corinth and became Company A of the Eleventh Mississippi Regiment of Volunteer Infantry, which was moved by train to Lynchburg, Virginia, and mustered into the Army of the Confederate States.

The Eleventh Mississippi had a distinguished war record. The regiment was in the First Battle of Manassas and at the Battle of Balls Bluff near Leesburg. Private Bridges was with it at the Second Battle of Manassas, where he was wounded in the side. After hospitalization, he was sent home on furlough, thus missing the Battle of Sharpsburg in September 1862.

He rejoined the regiment about the first of January 1863 at Goldsboro, North Carolina, and wrote home that the company was reduced to 38 men, many having been killed or wounded at Sharpsburg. That spring was spent in skirmishing around Suffolk, and Private Bridges reported that he had mumps in April and complained in a letter that he had flu while in "Camp" near Ivor Station, Virginia, in May.

The Eleventh Mississippi went with the rest of the Army of Northern Virginia to Gettysburg, where Private Bridges was wounded in the leg on July 3, 1863. (The Eleventh Mississippi was part of Davis's Brigade, Heth's Division, Hill's Corps, which charged with Pickett, but to his left.) He was hospitalized in Richmond, and rejoined his company when released.

During the Battle of the Wilderness, Private Bridges was wounded on May 5, 1864, near Orange Court House. He died on June 2, 1864.

From his hospital bed in Staunton, he dictated this final letter home.

Staunton, Va.
May 26th, 1864

My dear Sister,

Thro' the kindness of a Va. lady I can write to you now to let you know how I am getting along, tho' I am not able to write myself. My wound is getting on pretty well now tho a short time ago it was very painful. I have been sick—but I am better now, yet at times I suffer with my head.

This is the twentieth day since my leg was amputated, and tho I wrote my brother an account of it, for fear he did not receive my letter, I will write again the nature of my wound. I was shot the first day of the fight near Orange, C. H., and was struck with a minnie ball directly in front of the leg—the left—leg just below the knee—ranging up to the knee. My leg was amputated just above the knee on the field the next morning after I was wounded. I have kind attention of every sort and could not be better situated in a hospital. The surgeons are very attentive and the nurses very kind. A great many ladies came in to see me and bring me flowers and different things I want.

The surgeon speaks hopefully of my recovery and I am in great hope of getting well. You must tell Sister Carrie that I would write to her, but I am so weak as to be unable to write at all, but my friend, Mrs. Smith—who is writing this for me—says she will write to her for me in a few days.

The Dr. says it will take me sixty days to get well enough to travel around. Then I suppose it must be about four months from this time before I get well enough to get home.

If, however, it should please God to take me away, I have the consolation of knowing that I have "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" in whom *I will trust*.

Your afflicted brother,
R. C. Bridges

This last letter is one written by the hospital attendant to his sister following his death.

Staunton, Va. June 3rd, 1864

Mrs. Matilda Norman,

My dear Madam,

I wrote to you a short time since a letter dictated by your brother, Mr. R. C. Bridges. He was at that time in a slow fever which we had hoped might be relieved by careful attention but it pleased God it should be otherwise—and it is my painful duty to announce to you that he quietly breathed his last yesterday morning at 9 o'clock.

The ladies in this room have been much interested in the wounded soldiers sent here from the bloody fields of Spottsylvania and have visited them endeavoring to add some comforts and cheering words to what they could . . . from the nurses at the hospital. I have been one of this number and have for some time past been much with your brother. He has been a great sufferer, but spoke to me often of his Trust in a Saviour who is strong to save to the uttermost those who come unto God by Him. The night before his death I was with him till a late hour. He was, I saw, fast sinking. As I sat by him he opened his eyes and said "Oh, Mrs. Smith, as I slept I dreamed I saw my Mother,". I thought then it could not be long before his spirit goes to join his Mother's before the Great White Throne. I was not with him to the last, but the nurse told me he passed away peacefully being unconscious for some hours preceeding his death.

During the night his mind seemed to wander to your far off Mississippi home and he called for Sister Matilda. He made an effort once to sing and on being asked what he wished to sing he murmured—"When mine eyelids close in death", it being as you may recollect a sweet line from the beautiful hymn commencing "Rock of Ages Cleft for me."

His remains were carefully and decently attended as you could have wished. I gathered a bunch of fresh summer roses, and as I laid them on his breast, I prayed God to bless those left behind him to mourn . . . noble spirit sacrificed in his . . . I took away a bud to send you and hope you will value it as one which tho placed there by a stranger's hand was laid on his lifeless form with the tenderness and . . . of a sister. I have a lock of his hair and a black ring which he wore on his finger. These I will not send you now for fear the way is not open to a point so distant, but I will keep them till I hear from you or some other of your brother's friends telling me whether or not to send them. A letter directed to Mrs. Louisa A Smith, Staunton, Va. Box 16

will reach me safely I hope. And I will answer you promptly making such disposition as you should direct of the ring and hair. With best wishes for yourself and family, I am, Madam

Yours most respectfully,
Louisa A. Smith

This story is incomplete as two further questions arise.
Who was Mrs. Louisa A. Smith?

Is Private Richard C. Bridges one of the 3000 unknown Confederate soldiers who lie buried in Thornrose Cemetery?

THE FIRST METHODIST CHURCH IN WAYNESBORO

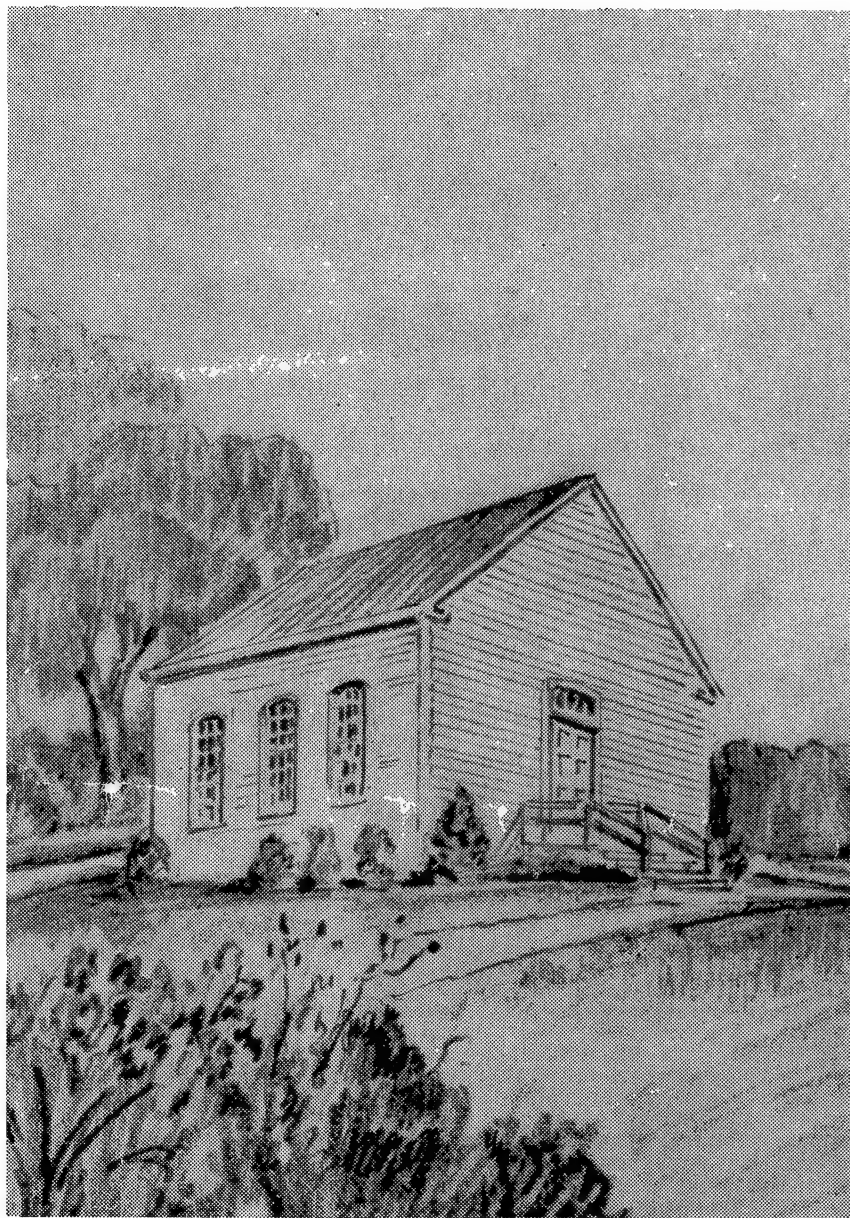
J. Paul Glick, Sr.

It is probable that by 1788, when the first Methodist ministers were appointed to the newly formed Rockingham Circuit, and very probably resided in Harrisonburg, a nucleus of active Methodists was forming in and around Waynesboro. These ministers were William Phoebus and James Riggins J.P., and no doubt began to serve these Waynesboro Methodists with some degree of regularity.

By 1806, when Noah Fidler was appointed to the newly formed Staunton Circuit, and could serve the Waynesboro Methodists still more frequently, this group must have grown quite rapidly until 1824 when they needed more spacious meeting facilities than just homes, stores and offices. About this date, according to the Staunton *Spectator* of 1884, the first Methodist church was built in Waynesboro.

The first church in Waynesboro, or Teesville, prior to 1797, was located in the Old Cemetery on the northeast corner of the present Broad Street and New Hope Road, just west of the Shopping Center. The land is said to have been donated by James Flack for the purpose of a church and cemetery. As the main population around Waynesboro in the early days was of Scotch Irish descent, it is natural that this first church was under strong Presbyterian influence. One newspaper record indicates that the first church structure was log or frame and was used for Union Services until 1824, when the Presbyterians replaced it with their first brick church. It is probable therefore that the first Methodist class or society used this Union church until 1824, when their first log church was built on present Ohio Street. Many early churches were deeded to the trustees after construction had been completed.

This appears to be the case of the first Waynesboro Methodist church. It was built in about 1824, and was deeded by the property owner, William Donahoo, to the several church trustees June 15, 1833. This first known list of trustees of the Waynesboro Methodist Church included: John Anderson, Joseph Brown, William Clarke, Thomas Bernard, John Koiner, James B. Taylor and John H. Taylor. This is recorded in Augusta County



The First Methodist Church in Waynesboro. Served the church from about 1824 to 1874; located on Ohio Street between Wayne Avenue and Church Street. This church was built of logs and was later covered with weather-board.

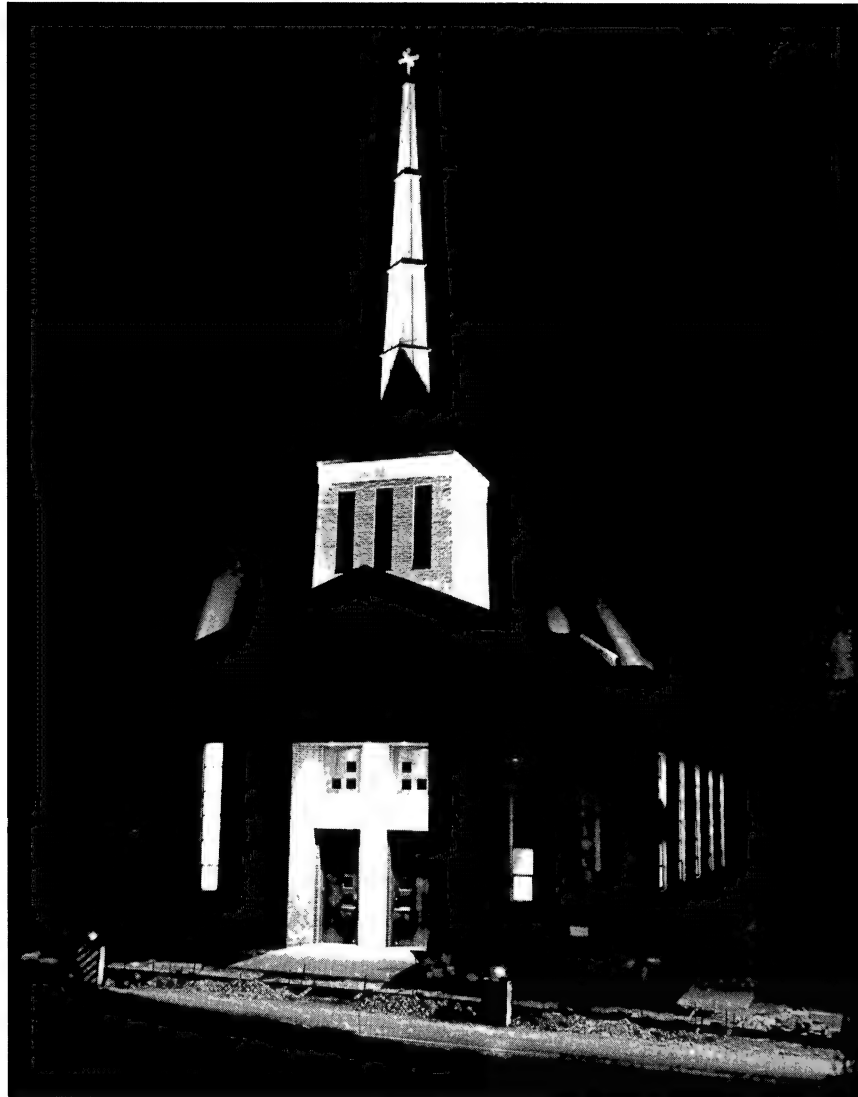
Drawing by Flemming Hurt, architect

Deed Book 55, pages 286 and 287, and states "where the Methodist church now stands." The recorded cost was \$35.00.

This church was a hewn log structure about 32 by 36 feet, built on a slope between old Mulberry and Ohio Streets, siding near the Ohio Street line and fronting toward Wayne. This location by the old "Estill plot" was lot 76 on the corner of Border and Glen Alleys. The north and south sides of the structure each had three windows of plain glass with a little arch at the top. The one door in the center of the east end with an arch of glass over it, to match the windows. The west end, where the pulpit was located, had no windows. Some say it originally had a door which opened from Glen Alley. It originally must have had a wooden shingle roof which lasted for many years, but at present has a metal roof which has preserved it well. From its first form with hewn logs of moderate size and durable "chinkin" it obviously underwent a number of changes. The outside was covered with overlap weatherboarding to obscure the logs and then painted a dark red. Inside split plastering laths were used with early square nails to cover the logs. After plastering and painting, artistic decoration was used. Parts of one mural are still observable. How many of these changes were made by the Methodists, and how many by the Baptists, is unknown. This building served the Waynesboro Methodists for 50 years, from 1824 to 1874. No doubt Tobias Riley was the first regular preacher at this church, and Addison Weller was the last. Approximately 30 preachers in charge, with approximately as many junior preachers, served this church during this period.

After the Methodists began to use their new brick church (No. II), the old log church was sold to the Waynesboro Baptist church for \$350.00 on July 28, 1874. This included the church building, but not the Parsonage, which was used by the Methodist church for about 23 more years. Methodist trustees effecting the sale were: John Huff, J. B. Taylor, Jonathan Koiner, J. S. Myers and H. H. Shackelford. The Baptist trustees were: S. H. Hunt, J. S. Ellis and G. Julian Pratt. This church was owned by the Waynesboro Baptist congregation for about 23 years, when they sold it to J. B. Roden on May 31, 1897, for \$225.00. This is about the time that J. B. Roden also bought the second Methodist parsonage, probably on the same original lot.

From this time on to the present this old log church has undergone many changes and been used for various purposes. It has periodically been used as a blacksmith shop, plumbing shop,



Present Church Building of the Main Street United Methodist Church
Courtesy of Alwood Studios

roofing shop and for other mundane purposes, but it still stands today, though in rude and neglectful disrepair, as a mute reminder of what past generations of Methodists could accomplish with so little.

I have been told that a number of graves of early Methodists lie unmarked around this structure which add to the sacredness of this hallowed spot. This I cannot prove.

The date—1883—appears to be a very important date in the history of Methodism in the Waynesboro area, and almost certainly marks the date the first resident Methodist minister was in the locality. This, therefore, seems to be the date that the first of the five different Methodist parsonages was acquired in Waynesboro, for the comfort and convenience of the minister in charge of the Augusta circuit.

Two Parsonages which Served the Log Church

PARSONAGE I

The first parsonage was a small log house of about two or three rooms and an attic. It stood at the foot of the hill just below the log church, which is located on Ohio Street. The parsonage faced on Mulberry Street, then Second Street, now Broad Street. It probably stood on the same lot that William Donohoo deeded to the trustees of the church in 1833 and was built there about that date.

Using the original maps of "Waynesborough" this location was on the N.E. corner of Second Main Street and "Glen Alley," lot 76, which was designated "Donahoo" and "Methodist Church." It is possible that this original log parsonage was first the residence of William Donohoo.

The above was taken from the original Estill plot by Samuel Estill and his wife Jean Estill, dated 1798, and supplemented by J. C. Massie and Dr. B. H. Henry, July 17, 1839.

This small log house must have served the preachers of the Augusta Charge as their parsonage for 38 years, until 1871, when plans for the next one was promoted. The first pastor to reside in this parsonage was probably John V. Ridgon and the last could have been J. R. Van Horn.

PARSONAGE II

On July 10, 1871, a "few friends and members of the M. E. Church met this evening by request—at the residence of Mr. Walter Mann— when Rev. J. R. Van Horn, P.E. stated the object of the meeting to be—that the members and friends of the church take some steps toward promoting a festival and supper—the proceeds to go toward building a parsonage—the only residence held by the church for the pastor being a *log* house, standing where the parsonage was afterwards built—or rather enlarged. John Huff, Dr. J. S. Myers and J. B. Roden being appointed the building committee."

"The net proceeds of the festival was \$107.27. Other personal donations were made, \$417.18 in cash besides lumber and time. The reconstruction and enlargement was begun in August 1871 and completed (date not recorded), with the exception of painting. \$27.00 was still due Mr. J. H. Gentry, which amount was paid by May 1873. This amount was paid from proceeds of a tableau given in the old church by ladies and gentlemen from Greenville, and included some from Waynesboro. This sum amounted to about \$50.00, leaving enough to paint the parsonage. Thus we see by the united efforts of our people and the friends of the church and the blessings of Him, who is the giver of every good and perfect gift—we have secured to our congregation a comfortable home for our preachers to come."

It is interesting to recall that this is in the year 1873, when Rev. Addison Weller was sent to Waynesboro and at once began efforts to build the new church of 1874.

This second parsonage served the church for about 26 years, being sold to J. B. Roden for \$400.00. The trustees making the sale were: J. B. Roden, J. E. Fultz, J. B. Lobban, and R. S. Griffith.

This parsonage was not demolished until the spring of 1969, when it was discovered that it had been built around the original log house, which had served as the first parsonage. It was materially altered when the second parsonage was built. The first pastor to reside in this second parsonage was probably J. R. Van Horn and the last was perhaps either J. R. Thrasher or G. Dorsey White.

Bibliography:

1. *A Church Record* by J. B. Roden, 1871 to 1883, in Archives of Main Street United Methodist Church.
2. Augusta County Clerks' Records, Staunton, Va.
3. Baltimore Conference Annuals.
4. Recollections of the Senior Members of the Church after 1943.

Encounter by the Shenandoah

R. S. Lewis

General Washington was tired. All day he'd been riding, making his way home from the Ohio Valley, and now he was reaching more familiar territory where he planned on spending several days with his old friend, Thomas Lewis of Lynnwood.

It was already late afternoon on this September day of 1784, and his thoughts were on the past as his horse stumbled down the tortuous trail at Brock's Gap. Below him, the sun's dying rays stretched long fingers across the rich quiltwork of green and tan fields—fields so recently wrested from the wilderness for cultivation by those first hardy pioneers.

Behind him in memory now were those rugged years of professional soldiering—first as major, then colonel and finally general. There were years of despair attempting to forge raw frontiersmen into trained militia, blending them with the regulars, many of whom, unlike the woodsman, were apt to run at the first sight of an Indian.

Well, those bloody years of the French and Indian wars had receded into the pages of history. So had the turbulent agonies of the Revolution, terminating three years ago when he'd received the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. Yes, Washington was tired. He thought longingly of Mount Vernon and felt gratitude that he would have a few days' pause at Lynnwood to again enjoy the amenities of life.

Down past Coote's Store he rode, by way of Turletown and Cherry Grove, crossing Linville Creek at Miss Kate Pennybacker's, on past the Widow Smith's, thence to Peale's Crossroads and on to Lawyer's Road.

Behind him, the wall of dark blue mountains folded into themselves as though preparing for sleep, and beyond rolling fields, the Shenandoah finally came into view, rippling gently in places; in other, mirroring the pastels of the sunset's afterglow.

"A highly respectable appearance," Washington noted of the river. "Possibly between eighty and hundred yards wide." He began to ruminate on possibilities of future navigation for trade with the West—a subject which he and Lewis might discuss that night as they sat around the great open fire in the library. Yes, it would be good to arrive at Lynnwood and enjoy good talk,



Thomas Lewis' original home, "Lynnwood," near Port Republic.

Used by permission of McClure Printing Company, Inc.;
from Wayland's *HISTORIC HOMES OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA*.

food and wine, with a downy pillow under his head come time for bed.

As he was fording the river, dusk swooped quickly down. Across the way, dim crossroads stretched out into what, for some reason, seemed to be unfamiliar distances. Washington found himself unaccountably perplexed. Despite his years of wilderness traveling, and now being on fairly familiar terrain, he realized, not without some amusement, that he was lost.

Nineteen year old Tom Gilmer, tall, sturdy, eyes bright and head held high with what could be anger, strode rapidly down the path through the high undergrowth, making his way home from the usual evening visit to Lynnwood. Anyone who happened to see him might well have wondered why he was departing so much earlier than usual. Had he and young Elizabeth quarreled? It was community gossip that he'd been spending more and more time over there and he had taken his share of teasing concerning a possible budding romance.

"Let them josh!" he thought petulantly. He *liked* being at Lynnwood and not just because of Elizabeth (or so he told himself).

He always enjoyed the tales Thomas Lewis often told—tales of the old days which fired his imagination. Tales of Thomas Lewis's parents, John and Margaret Lynn Lewis, and their dramatic flight from Ulster; of taming the wilderness during the early days at Bellefonte; the horrors of Indian raids in the Valley; the daring exploits of Elizabeth's uncles, Colonel Charles and General Andrew Lewis, at Point Pleasant. And on the lighter side were the rollicking stories of Williamsburg when Thomas had gone down to sit with the House of Burgesses.

There were also the adventuresome days of the surveying trips—with young Washington—with Peter Jefferson—when they and their men had hacked, clawed, torn their way through unbelievable wilderness wastes of forest, mountain, crag, cliff and river, laying down boundary lines which were to stand intact for centuries to come.

References to Washington never failed to thrill young Tom Gilmer. To him, as to others, the man had become a hero, a legend in his own time. Often, Tom had wished that he could have known this great general.

Now, as he pushed through the tall grass on the Shenandoah's banks, a man on horseback loomed up suddenly before

him. Although it was dusk, one could make out a tall, solidly built figure, a face with square jaws and very prominent features. "Probably some red-faced Dutchman," Tom thought, "fairly new to the settlement."

The man reigned in his horse sharply. "I seem to have lost my direction," he said. "Can you tell me which way to Mr. Thomas Lewis's?"

To Tom there seemed to be a hint of concealed amusement in the man's question. He flushed. "Here's another one who wishes to make sport with me concerning Elizabeth," he said to himself. "He very well knows I could tell him the way to Lynnwood." He eyed the stranger up and down with cool detachment, letting his gaze rest especially on the face with its prominent features.

"Why don't you just follow your nose?" he said tartly and, possibly muttering under his breath, "*that* should get you there," plunged off into the darkness.

General Washington did follow his nose and eventually found himself riding down the long tree-lined lane at the end of which the lights from Lynnwood gleamed through the dark. As he dined the following evening with the Lewis party at Begota, Lawyer Gabriel Jones's home across the river, it is quite probable that in the paneled, candlelit room, along with the tinkle of crystal and silver, he related his amusing tale of the impudent young stranger he'd met along the way.

It is not also without reason to suppose that within the few days of his visit among the close-knit Gilmer, Jones and Lewis families, Washington would eventually be introduced to Tom Gilmer. We can only surmise the dazed shock of that young man when confronted with the "red-faced Dutchman" who turned out to be his hero, General George Washington. And we can be equally assured that for a long time afterward, the countryside would not allow him to forget his first encounter with the future President and Father of his Country.

Epilogue

Young Tom did marry Elizabeth Lewis. Years later, their own son, George Rockingham Gilmer, was to become Governor of Georgia. With his mother, Elizabeth Lewis Gilmer, at his side he wrote down many of her stories of the old days as she related them which he later used in a book which was published. Thus, one generation passes its tales on to another, and this is the stuff of which the romance of history is made.

Virginia Valley Records—John W. Wayland

Annals of Augusta County—Waddell

History of Augusta County—Peyton

Eighth of a Series

OLD HOMES OF AUGUSTA COUNTY

"ROCKY HILL"

The Ancestral Home of the Caldwell Family Near Fishersville

Gladys B. Clem

When William Beverley received a royal grant from King George II, dated September 7, 1736, for 118,491 acres "between the great mountains," he lost no time in setting up a vast real estate deal that included a large area of present Augusta County.

Four years later, George Caldwell, his wife Mary, and their children, William, Mary, John, Jane, David, and Agnes, came to America, proved their importation July 24, 1740, and took up 405 acres of Beverley's grant.

They selected a site on a steep rise overlooking a wide meadow watered by a small creek. Caldwell lost no time in building a home for his family. Convenient limestone outcroppings supplied material for the thick stone foundation that formed a deep basement against the hill. No doubt they thought it would provide a fort-like protection in case of Indian attack. Fortunately it was never needed for this purpose, as far as is known.

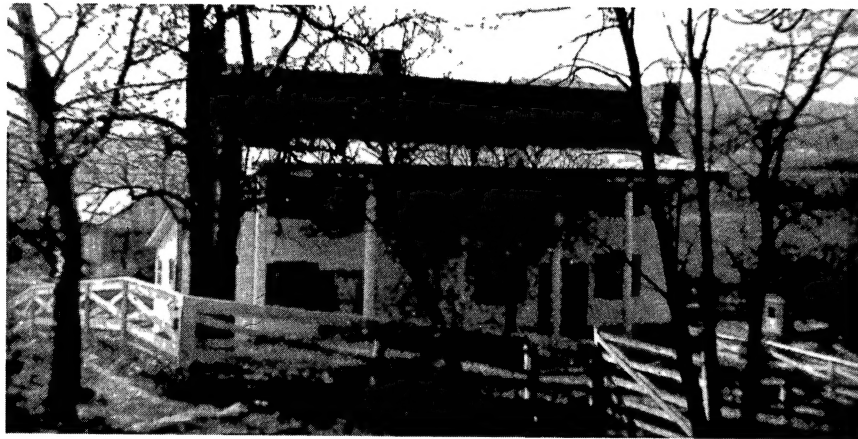
The substantial log dwelling—many of the logs measuring sixteen inches or more in thickness—has housed seven generations of the Caldwell family since it was built in 1742. The present owners being Mr. and Mrs. Charles M. Caldwell, who reside there with their two sons, Charles M., Jr., and Deane Caldwell. One of the few original grants still in possession of the same family, the homestead is also one of the oldest dwellings in the county.

Various architectural changes have been made over the years. At one time an extension was added to the home, it was probably at this time the logs were covered with siding. Other rooms were added, making the home much larger than it was originally. Later these rooms were removed.

Many features that are characteristic of the period in which the house was built have been retained in the recent renovation. The fireplaces are broad and deep and the mantels, somewhat plain in design, are well proportioned to the rooms. The original chair rail has the lower section panelled, the boards being uniquely cut on the diagonal. The narrow, partially enclosed stairway that leads to the second story has been little changed during its



"Rocky Hill" before changes were made.



Caldwell Home after changes in construction.

centuries of use. The wide random width flooring attests to it having been cut from virgin timber—one board measuring nineteen inches across! When old plastering and laths were removed from these upper rooms a smooth sealing, put together with pegs and hand made nails, came to light, which has been carefully preserved and hand waxed.

Mrs. T. H. Daffin, the former Mary Susan Caldwell, recollects in detail various features of her old family home, familiarly known as "Rocky Hill." She described the long hall that extended from the front of the house to the rear and its coolness on hot summer days. The back part being called the "water hall," as here water was piped from the spring at the foot of the hill and forced into the house by means of a "Rife ram." This

being a popular piece of equipment used in pre-motor days at the turn of the century, having been invented and manufactured by W. A. Rife of Waynesboro.

Mrs. Daffin remembers vividly the day tragedy struck their home. All the children were at school, leaving only the baby, Margaret, lively, active, and unusually quick for her two years, to entertain herself. Shortly after the older children had gone, Mrs. Caldwell suddenly missed the little girl. Searching and calling for her through the house, she could find no trace of the small runaway. She then thought of the meadow, the children's favorite place to play, although Margaret was never allowed there alone. As she hurried down the path to the creek she could see a bit of the familiar blue dress in the distance. Running to the spot as fast as her legs could carry her, she found the child lying in the shallow water. When she picked her up it was to hold a limp and lifeless form in her arms. She tried every means of restoration she knew—but it was too late. There was no sign of life left in the small body.

Missing the other children, it was thought Margaret had gone to hunt for them along the creek where they usually played, had fallen in and drowned.

Traditionally, the Caldwell family have always been identified with Tinkling Spring Presbyterian Church. Since August 14, 1741, when George Caldwell was listed among the subscribers, who had appointed several leaders of the community "to chuse and purchase a piece of ground to build a meeting house," they have played a prominent part in its growth and development. The site selected was adjacent to and joined the Caldwell land.

In this day of change and progress(?) it is refreshing to come upon this lovely two-centuries old church and the old home of equal years among Augusta's rolling hills. Even the highway on which both are located is linked with this early period, being authorized by the Orange County Court "on Thursday, the 26th Day of July 1744," that "a road be cleared from Finley's Mill to the Tinkling Spring." The section leading by the church and Caldwell home is designated as "old Rt. 608," being a nostalgic reminder of the days when "ye tinkling spring" was the hub of a busy cross roads thoroughfare.

References:

Mrs. T. H. Daffin (Mary Susan Caldwell) Fishersville, Virginia
Orange County Court Records, Order Book II, p. 210
Headwater of Freedom by Dr. Howard M. Wilson

Augusta County Court Proceedings OVER TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO

John Cunningham to provide candles, keep fires and clean the Court house and bring in his charge at the next levy.

On application of above, Robert McCutchen refused to deliver up the keys of the Court house, claiming a property right in the Court house and jail to which he offered to execute a lease to the County, which he referred to the General Court. Sheriff is ordered to procure a lock and key and Gabriel Jones (the King's attorney) to prosecute Robert in General Court.

Called Court on Hugh McNamara, charged with aiding and assisting the Shawnee Indians in alliance with the French Nation for and endeavoring to mislead the Cherokee Indians, his Majesty's friends and allies. He is to be tried at Court of Oyer and Terminer in June next and to be carried to Williamsburg for trial.

Called Court on Julian Mahoney for taking a gold ring from James Hughes. Given 39 lashes.

Called Court on Michael Kelley for larceny—taking a horse without a press warrant. Given 25 lashes.

Church Wardens to bind Agnes McCray to James Sawyer, who agrees to give her when free 1 cow, 1 good calf and such a suit of clothing as 3 pound sterling would have bought when she was first bound by consent of her mother, in 1772.

August 19, 1780

Thomas Hughes, appointed surveyor of the streets of Staunton.

John Stewart vs. Adam Jordan and his wife Sarah—Sarah said Sam was a thief and a wizard (meaning he had a secret, sinful and wicked communication and correspondence with the Devil)

September 18, 1747

Clerk ordered to make copies of letters to and from Colonel Beverley, also the charges the County has been at for junking and daubing the Court house and represent how unfit the Court house is to hold Court this winter—all to be laid before the Council.